

The Eyes of the Lord Are in Every Place

Proverbs 15:3

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“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” - Proverbs 15:3.

The “eye” is a physical attribute well known to man that has a varied application in the Bible that is very useful to help us to understand just what it is that Solomon had in mind when he penned this passage. There are some applications that are quite useful to use - we’ll look through how the Scripture uses them for us as we read:

1. *The light of the body.*

Matt 6:22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.”

Jesus took the OT idea and used it illustrate what He had to say in His preaching concerning the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The eye, He says, is (one of) the ways by which the body discerns what is going on around it. There is also the implication that it is a given way to take inn what God has put around us to perceive and understand the surroundings in which we find ourselves. Jesus also gave us the wise application of telling us to be sure that we take what the eye reveals us and see to it we interpret it as God instructs us. He is implying that we can we are seeing what the eye reveals as “good” in order that we learn and apply what we come to know.

It is important to know that the implication here is, also that not everything we see has a “good” effect. “If your eye is good” tells us that there is the possibility that what we see CAN fail to give us the “light” He is talking about. If the eye does not take in what is “around us” rightly (rooted in the content and teaching of the Word of God, based on the other passages in the NT) rightly, as “light” then our bodies will NOT be “full of light”. We certainly WANT the body to be “full of light” and thus, Solomon says, we ought to see to it that our eyes are looking and interpreting (via the Word of God and NOT our own preferences) what it is that we see so that it can be to us what God desires for it to be. Again this is NOT a matter of our preferences, but of God’s desire for us.

In Luke 11 Jesus gives us the Parable of “The Lighted Lamp”:

Luke 11:34 The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is good, your whole body also is full of light. But when your eye is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

It is virtually a word for word quote of what we have talked about from Proverbs. It is a part of the numerous Parables Jesus taught throughout His

teaching ministry. He added to it a bit by adding the idea that “...if your eye is bad, your body is also full of darkness”.

Just to carry the idea a bit further, we can say that there are a number of ways in which the idea of the Lamp and the light and benefit it gives us is used figuratively at least 8 times in the Scriptures:

1. It speaks of God in 2 Samuel 22:29
2. It speaks of the Holy Spirit in Rev. 4:5
3. It speaks of God’s Word in Psa. 119:105 and Prov. 6:23
4. It speaks of Salvation in Isa. 62:1
5. It speaks of man’s life several times, in Job 18:6, 21:17; Psa. 18:28; and Prov. 20:20
6. It speaks of man’s spirit over in Prov. 20:27
7. It is seen to speak of a king in 1 Kings 15:4; Ps. 132:17
8. It is also used to speak of man’s eye itself in Mt. 6:22

2. We’re Told things about God’s Relationship to the Eye

A. He is seen to have “Made” them.

Prov 20:12 The hearing ear and the seeing eye, The LORD has made them both.

This, of course refers to God’s role in the creation of man and of all that he is physically. But there is also the implication that God included, in that creation the ability interpret and understand what is seen and heard.

This, we might carry a bit further in that...

B. David says that God “Formed” the eye and the ear

Ps 94:9 He who planted the ear, shall He not hear? He who formed the eye, shall He not see?

Just a brief note here, we wish to say that the eyes and ears of man (and, the implication is, of all creatures) is NOT the product of evolution or any other natural process; it is the result of the creative act of the One True and Living God!! How arrogant men are to claim that they have arisen from mere cells in a fashion that completely denies any and all of the laws of physics! What is significant for us is to remember that the God Who created us and formed all of our “parts” sees and hears all that goes on before Him.

C. It is God Who “Opens” our Eyes and Ears.

2 Kin 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.” Then the LORD opened the eyes of the young man,

and he saw. And behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

Of course what is referred to here is that it is He Who, by His own power and wisdom, that enables men to use these “instruments” both profitably and in a manner in which is profitable and leads to truth.

Ps 146:8 The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; The LORD raises those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the righteous.

The word “Blind” is used in at least two ways in the Bible, meaning, of course, physical blindness or being unable to see through our physical eyes. But it can also speak of being spiritually blind or unable to perceive or grasp hold of the great truths that lead to a relationship with God or take a believe further along in that relationship. The implication here is that it is needful, in the extreme, to appeal to God and to take advantage of the skills He makes available in order to “see” in the fashion He desires for His children to see. Otherwise we will find ourselves in the state of spiritual blindness (not being unredeemed) once more. Along this line we ought to add that...

D. It is God Who Enlightens His people...

Ezra 9:8 And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage.

The state of being able to either perceive OR understand the truths of God and His Word and definitely NOT a part of the natural condition of man. In fact, we are told multiplied times throughout the Bible that the natural state of man is to be haters of God and pretty much as rebellious against He and His position as Maker and Master they can manage.

God does not simply “enlighten, but we are told that, via His Holy Spirit, He enlightens, teaches, and draws men into a condition of obedience and enlightenment. This is not a popular idea for men to come to grips with, but it is the teaching of God’s Word never the less.

Ps 13:3 Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; Enlighten my eyes, Lest I sleep the sleep of death;

Actually, there are quite a number of usages for the image of the “eye” in the Scripture and we can briefly just look to see what they are, take a moment or two and ponder them for what, perhaps the Lord might have to say to you by means of them...

3. They are spoken of as Being “Frequently bright”.

1 Sam 16:12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, with bright eyes, and good-looking. And the LORD said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is the one!”

This passage gives the account of David being anointed King of Israel by the hand of the Prophet Samuel and the command of God. When David is brought in by those escorting him, he is said to be “ruddy”, meaning of a healthy and glowing countenance. He was also “good-looking” meaning that pretty much anyone would have, upon seeing him, considered him to be handsome. He was also observed to have “bright eyes” suggesting intelligence. God’s chosen king was handsome to look at, although that was almost certainly not the reason for his selection by God. His appearance was perhaps enhanced by a genuine faith and joy in Yahweh. (See 17:42).

4. One’s Eyes are Sometimes described as Being “delicate”.

Gen 29:17 Leah’s eyes were delicate, but Rachel was beautiful of form and appearance.

We’re told here that Rachel was beautiful in pretty much every way a man would use to evaluate her. But Leah, her sister was “weak” of eyes, meaning that her eyes were “delicate” likely meaning that they were a pale color rather than the dark and sparkling eyes most common and that were valued (and still are in that area of the world). Such paleness was viewed as a blemish.

5. The Bible Occasionally Speaks of Eye as “defective”.

Lev 21:20 or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or a man who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch.

Leviticus 21 speaks, among other things, of the regulations for the conduct of Priests. The essence of the passage is that the things of spoken of in the negative cause a sort of defilement in the Priest. Actually, the Scripture gives a total of 12 physical qualifications that were required of Priests:

1. Without blemish on the body (Lev. 21:17-18,21). God commanded this 52 Times regarding animals sacrificed by the priests. Christ, the fulfillment of that which was typical in the law, was Himself without blemish (1Pet. 1:19). The church will be presented to Him that way (Eph. 5:27).
2. Free from blindness (Lev. 21:18). Both the priests and sacrifices offered were required to be thus (Lev. 22:22; Dt. 15:21).
3. Free from lameness (Lev. 21:18; cp. Dt. 15:21; Mal. 1:8,13).
4. Without deformed nose (Lev. 21:18).

5. Without anything superfluous (Hebrew: sara` (H8311), "to prolong"; i.e. be deformed by excess of members as an extra finger or toe, Lev. 21:18; cp. Lev. 22:23).
6. Without a broken foot--any foot deformity (Lev. 21:19).
7. Without a broken hand--any hand deformity (Lev. 21:19).
8. Without a crooked back, humpback, or other back deformity (Lev. 21:20).
9. Without dwarfishness, not being extra small or undeveloped (Lev. 21:20).
10. Without an eye blemish of any kind (Lev. 21:20).
11. Without scurvy or scabbed places--any skin disease or imperfection (Lev. 21:20).
12. Without rupture or imperfect genital parts (Lev. 21:20).

If such qualifications for ministers were required today most men would have to quit the ministry (cp. Heb. 8:6).

6. It Is Interesting that the Parts of the Eye are Mentioned in Scripture

A. The lid.

Job 16:16 My face is flushed from weeping, And on my eyelids is the shadow of death;

B. The brow.

Lev 14:9 But on the seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows--all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

7. Likewise, the Various Actions of the Eye are Mentioned in Scripture

A. Seeing.

Job 7:8 The eye of him who sees me will see me no more; While your eyes are upon me, I shall no longer be.

Job 28:10 He cuts out channels in the rocks, And his eye sees every precious thing.

B. Winking.

Prov 10:10 He who winks with the eye causes trouble, But a prating fool will fall.

C. Weeping.

Job 16:20 My friends scorn me; My eyes pour out tears to God.

Ps 88:9 My eye wastes away because of affliction. LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.

Lam 1:16 “For these things I weep; My eye, my eye overflows with water; Because the comforter, who should restore my life, Is far from me. My children are desolate Because the enemy prevailed.”

D. It is Spoken of as “Guiding”.

Num 10:31 So Moses said, “Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes.

Ps 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye.

8. The “light” of, Speaks of Being That Which “rejoices the heart”.

Prov 15:30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart, And a good report makes the bones healthy.

9. A Person is not satisfied with ONLY seeing.

Prov 27:20 Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.

Ecl 1:8 All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing.

10. Neither is One Who Looks Around Able to be satisfied with riches.

Ecl 4:8 There is one alone, without companion: He has neither son nor brother. Yet there is no end to all his labors, Nor is his eye satisfied with riches. But he never asks, “For whom do I toil and deprive myself of good?” This also is vanity and a grave misfortune.

11. Believers are Commanded that Nothing Wicked Ought to be “set before”.

Ps 101:3 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me.

12. Because of the Above, We Must See That A Guard Must Be “set on”.

Job 31:1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?”

Prov 23:31 Do not look on the wine when it is red, When it sparkles in the cup, When it swirls around smoothly;

13. Speaking of the Forbidden Drunken Effect of Alcohol, the Bible Says that the Eyes are “Made red” by wine.

Gen 49:12 His eyes are darker than wine, And his teeth whiter than milk.

Prov 23:29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes?

14. Also, We’re Told That the Eye Grows “dim” by sorrow.

Job 17:7 My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow, And all my members are like shadows.

15. In Similar Fashion, They Grow “dim” by age.

Gen 27:1 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was old and his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, “My son.” And he answered him, “Here I am.”

1 Sam 3:2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli was lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow so dim that he could not see,

16. As an Illustration of the Effect, We’re Told that the Eye is “Wasted by grief”.

Ps 6:7 My eye wastes away because of grief; It grows old because of all my enemies.

Ps 31:9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble; My eye wastes away with grief, Yes, my soul and my body!

17. Quite Understandably, the Bible Tells us that They are Consumed by Sickness.

Lev 26:16 I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.

18. The Eyes are Used to Say Several Things About The Jews

A. They Wore Their “Phylacteries” Between Their Eyes.

Ex 13:16 It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt.”

Matt 23:5 But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.

B. They Often “Raised up” Their Eyes, in Prayer.

Ps 121:1 I will lift up my eyes to the hills- From whence comes my help?

Ps 123:1 Unto You I lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens.

C. Relatedly, They Cast Their Eyes on the Ground, in Humiliation.

Luke 18:13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

19. The Jewish women Often Painted Their Eyes.

2 Kin 9:30 Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it; and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window.

Jer 4:30 “And when you are plundered, What will you do? Though you clothe yourself with crimson, Though you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, Though you enlarge your eyes with paint, In vain you will make yourself fair; Your lovers will despise you; They will seek your life.

Ezek 23:40 “Furthermore you sent for men to come from afar, to whom a messenger was sent; and there they came. And you washed

yourself for them, painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments.

20. It Was Even True that Their Eyes were Often Put Out as a Punishment.

Judg 16:21 Then the Philistines took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison.

1 Sam 11:2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this condition I will make a covenant with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring reproach on all Israel."

2 Kin 25:7 Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, put out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

21. It was Cited as an Illustration of Punishment for Injuring.

Ex 21:24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot,

Ex 21:26 "If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye.

Lev 24:20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him.

Matt 5:38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'

22. In Fact, it Often Illustrative of Several Things:

A. The mind.

Matt 6:22–23 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

B. They're Used of Being Open to spiritual illumination.

Psa 119:18 Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law.

Psa 119:37 Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, And revive me in Your way.

C. Profoundly, the Anointing with Eye Salve Spoke of Healing by God’s Spirit.

Rev 3:18 I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.

And so we can see why Solomon used this figure in such a profound fashion:

“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” - Proverbs 15:3.

We should notice that the figure here speaks of God as One who is “All-Knowing” and from Whom nothing can be hidden. It is very good and helpful, if not motivating in a number of ways as we seek to live lives that are pleasing to God and serve His purposes.

To summarize the interpretation here - In adaptation to human understanding, the omniscience of the Deity is here and elsewhere compared to eyes - “seven eyes,” indicating perfectness (2 Chron. 16:9; Zech. 4:10). They are said to observe, to examine, to behold (as from a watch-tower) the evil and the good everywhere. The doctrine has both its alarming and its comfortable side, but as it is intended first to warn, “the evil” are first spoken of. We should note that there is no intended sense in which it is suggested that there is a physical sense in which God is to be viewed, as in many of the idols in the OT (not to mention the Modern).

As always, there are a number of illustrations for us to consider:

- The omniscient eye of God observed our first parents in the garden,
- Joseph and Manasseh in prison,
- Achan within his tent,
- Hezekiah on his sick-bed,
- Nebuchadnezzar in his palace,
- the three youths in the furnace,
- Jonah in the whale,
- Nathanael under the fig-tree,
- Peter on the housetop,
- Herod on his throne,
- Lydia by the river-side,
- Paul in the tempest and before Nero,
- And the Apostle John in exile on Patmos.

Thinking of the matter of application; it is evident from Holy Scripture that nothing escapes the penetrating eye of God. He sees not only every man, but all his doings and all his thoughts. As our Governor, above all as our Judge, it is essential all should be “naked and open” to His Eyes. He must know all, that He

may “rule in righteousness” and “*judge righteous judgment.*” Man in his sinfulness would prefer an impersonal God, would make of the machinery of Nature a God which he might observe without being himself observed. But the proofs of God’s all-seeing Eye are too irrefutable, and conscience bears witness to It too feelingly, to allow of there being as much atheism spoken as is acted.

Yet the inner spirit of the guilty, until reconciled, is atheistic, and he saith with Job’s adulterer, “*No eye shall see me*” (Job 24:15). The same man would call upon God in time of danger. So easy is it to own omniscience and yet live “*without God.*” But, indeed, the thought of the all-seeing Eye is too terrible, when realized, to be endured unless we recognize in It the “beamings” of compassionate love.

Am I, in the spirit of adoption, able to look up to God and cry, “*Abba, Father*”? Then, while the certainty that at every moment “*Thou, God, seest me,*” will make me watchful not to offend, in private as well as in public, in the church, in the counting-house, in the shop, in the street, wherever I am, it will not fill me with dismay. For I shall remember that He sees “*the good*” as well as “*the evil,*” and will reward the honest effort of His child to be good. He sees my faults. He sees my repentance also. He sees me “in the Beloved,” and accepts me for His sake.