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## God Sees

In 1990 the Hubble telescope first began sending images of space back to earth. The Hubble telescope, which is still being used in spite of several breakdowns, continues to be used by scientists to take pictures of distant places in space. The Hubble orbits the earth.

On December 25, 2021, a much more powerful telescope was sent into space. The James Webb telescope orbits the sun and is located 1.5 million km from earth. The images sent back to earth from the Webb telescope have given astronomers views of distant galaxies that we did not know existed. We are discovering that there is so much more in our universe than we could ever have imagined.

On the other end of the scale, we have microscopes which are able to magnify small objects so that we can see them. The Titan Krios is the most powerful microscope in the world and is used in the field of biology, enabling scientists to study biological processes with the purpose of developing new therapies. With this microscope scientists are able to see things that the human eye has never seen before.

In the last few decades, we have been given the ability to see so much more of our universe, from the giant distant galaxies, hundreds of millions of light years away to tiny proteins which are necessary for life. Yet, in spite of what we can see, there is so much that remains unseen. While we may be able to see galaxies, we cannot see individual stars within them, and we certainly cannot see the planets that orbit those stars. And we cannot see the smallest particles that make up the physical world, the molecules that are comprised of the even smaller atoms, which, in turn, are made up of protons, neutrons, and electrons. Even if we develop better machines, we will never be able to see everything. Some things are too far away, and some things are too small.

Even in things that we are familiar with, there is a grandeur and complexity that astounds us. The average human body is made up of about 30 trillion cells, although that number varies depending on size and age. In addition, there are about another 30 trillion bacteria cells which inhabit the human body. We should be aware that each cell of a living organism is incredibly complex, so complex that no one understands all the parts and processes fully although some do have a fairly good grasp on some of the aspects of what makes a cell work.

As I was writing this, I spent a little time on the Internet looking at pictures produced in the last few years of big things and small things that we can now see using the instruments we have created. The world is truly an amazing place.

As we continue to learn about the immensity and complexity of the world, we can be increasingly amazed about the God who created all things. God doesn't need a microscope or telescope to see small and big things, and he grasps fully how a living cell operates. There is no complexity that escapes God's understanding. The Bible says that God knows the stars by name (and there are a lot of them) and he has numbered the grains of sand. We can also be fairly certain that he also knows the exact location of every

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particle in this vast universe. All this is well within his range of knowledge and understanding. Nothing escapes God's notice or attention.

If God can keep all of that straight, then we can also believe that he can easily know the identity of every single human being (all 8+billion of us) who live on this earth. That God would know my name is not beyond the realm of possibility, considering what else he knows. Unlike us, fortunately, God does not forget. I may forget a name of someone I have not seen in a while, but God's memory is permanent. He does not forget because he cannot forget. And while we may stop thinking about people we haven't seen for a while, we are always in God's sight, and he won't stop thinking about us.

In the benediction that I often use at the end of the service, we hear the words, "May God turn his face toward you and give you peace." This is imagery, of course, in which we perceive God as having a face that he can turn away from us. He is not limited as we are, so his face can never be turned away from us. This benediction is not a wish that God would look at us, notice us, and so bless us, but, rather, it is an acknowledgement that when we know that God sees us, we can be at peace.

When we become aware that the God who holds the universe in his hands also sees us, we become convinced that he will not abandon us. It may seem from time to time that he has forgotten us because we perceive that we need we did not receive. It may seem that way to us, but let us remember that each of us is but one of 8 billion people in a vast universe, and God is moving everything forward according to his purpose. We may not receive what we want or even what we perceive we need, but we must also believe that there is a reason for that, a reason which we may never know. In the end, we must submit ourselves to the God who knows all things and simply trust that he knows what he is doing and leave it at that. Knowing that God is sovereign over all and that he has turned his face toward us should leave us with a sense of peace that in the end, all will be well.

To put it another way, we believe in an Almighty God, as the Apostles' Creed says, meaning that we recognize that God made the universe and knows and understands every part of it. But the Creed also says that God is our Father, meaning that he notices us; he sees us. And when God sees something, he does not leave it unattended.

As we gain the ability to see the vastness and complexity of the universe, we do so as mere observers. We can do nothing to affect a distant galaxy, and even though we may be able to see small bits of our bodies, we are often powerless to change them in a positive way. But when God sees something, it gains his attention, and he attends to it. God sees every part of this universe, to the smallest part, he attends to it, and he moves it toward the goal for which he created it. God sees us, notices us, and he attends to us. May our faith in this Almighty God and eternal Father give us a sense of peace as he turns his face toward us.

Pastor Gary