

- 1) "The Ethiopians say that their gods are flat-nosed and black, while the Thracians say that theirs have blue eyes and red hair. Yet if cattle or horses or lions had hands and could draw, and could sculpt like men, then the horses would draw their gods like horses, and cattle like cattle; and each they would shape bodies of gods in the likeness, each kind, of their own." –Xenophanes, 6th century.

- 2) Wonder occurs when somebody sees the effect and does not know the cause. The cause of wonder is therefore twofold: either because the cause is totally unknown, or because the effect manifesting the cause does not do so perfectly. The first does not apply to God: since he produces the effect: as in Romans 1: "For the invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." I say that He produces the effect, but not one which perfectly manifests its cause: and thereby He remains wonderful. –Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Psalm 8*

- 3) And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." ¹⁸ Moses said, "I pray thee, show me thy glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live." ²¹ And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; ²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; ²³ then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen." Exodus 33:17-23 RSV.

- 4) Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Beth-sa'ida in Galilee, and said to him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew went with Philip and they told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. John 12:20-24.

Philosophy and the Desire to See God's Face

- I. Intro
- II. Examine Aristotle's claim that "all men desire to know."
- III. Show that wonder—the name we use to signify the proper activity of this desire—is primarily for knowledge of the first cause for its own sake.
- IV. Illustrate The Paradox: The eternal and first cause is beyond our natural understanding.
- V. Consider how, despite the prohibition of idols, the Israelites desired to see God's face.
 - a. This desire—along with using God's proper name—expressed a wish for communion with God as a person in the intimacy of friendship and the desire to see His essence.
- VI. Show that Christ claims to be the solution to the paradox of the Greeks and the fulfillment of the hope of the Israelites.