

# Psalms 34:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.

## Analysis

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**They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.** David moves from personal testimony (I sought, v. 4) to collective experience (they looked). This universalizes his experience—what God did for David, He does for all who look to Him. Light replaces darkness; shame gives way to honor.

They looked unto him transitions from singular to plural. David's deliverance wasn't unique exception but example of God's consistent pattern. Looked (nabat) means to regard, gaze upon, fix eyes on. This is faith's posture—looking away from self, circumstances, fears toward God. Looking implies dependency, expectation, focus. Just as Israel looked to bronze serpent for healing (Numbers 21:9), believers look to God for salvation.

And were lightened describes transformation. Lightened (nahar) means to beam, shine, radiate, be radiant. Their faces lit up, shone with joy. This is visible, external manifestation of internal transformation. Darkness of fear, shame, despair gives way to light of hope, confidence, joy. Isaiah 60:5 uses same word: you shall see and be lightened. Faces reflecting God's glory become testimonies to His grace.

And their faces were not ashamed completes transformation. Not ashamed (chapher) means not disappointed, not put to shame, not confounded. Those looking to God aren't let down; their hope isn't proved foolish; their trust isn't betrayed. Faces represents public honor—what others see, reputation, social

standing. No shame means vindication, honor, dignity restored. Where disgrace threatened, honor results; where shame loomed, glory appears.

New Testament parallels are striking. 2 Corinthians 3:18 declares believers beholding as in glass glory of Lord are changed into same image from glory to glory. Moses' face shone after encountering God (Exodus 34:29-35). Stephen's face shone like angel's as he testified (Acts 7:55-56). Those looking to Jesus reflect His glory, their faces radiating hope rather than shame.

## Historical Context

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Bronze serpent incident (Numbers 21:4-9) provides Old Testament type. Israelites dying from serpent bites were commanded to look to bronze serpent on pole for healing. Those who looked lived; those who didn't died. Looking demonstrated faith—trusting God's provision rather than relying on own remedies. Jesus applied this to Himself: As Moses lifted up serpent in wilderness, so must Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:14-15).

Faces being lightened/shining appears throughout Scripture as visible mark of God's blessing. Aaron's benediction: LORD make His face shine upon you (Numbers 6:25). Righteous will shine as sun in kingdom (Matthew 13:43). This isn't merely metaphorical but eschatological—believers will literally reflect God's glory eternally.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. What does it mean to look unto God—how is this more than mental assent or occasional prayer?

2. How have you experienced being lightened—inner transformation manifesting in visible joy or peace—when looking to God?
3. Why does looking to God prevent shame—what is connection between faith and honor, trust and vindication?
4. In what ways do believers' faces (public demeanor) testify to whether they're looking to God or to circumstances?
5. How does bronze serpent illustration help understand looking to Christ for salvation?

## Interlinear Text

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<p>הֵבּ יוֹ</p> <p><b>They looked</b></p> <p><small>H5027</small></p>	<p>אֶל יוֹ</p> <p><small>H413</small></p>	<p>וְנֶהְרָא</p> <p><b>unto him and were lightened</b></p> <p><small>H5102</small></p>	<p>וּפְנֵיהֶם</p> <p><b>and their faces</b></p> <p><small>H6440</small></p>	<p>אֶל</p> <p><small>H408</small></p>
<p>יִחְפָּרוּ:</p> <p><b>were not ashamed</b></p> <p><small>H2659</small></p>				

## Additional Cross-References

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**Hebrews 12:2** (Parallel theme): Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

**Psalms 18:28** (Light): For thou wilt light my candle: the LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

**Psalms 25:3** (Parallel theme): Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed: let them be ashamed which transgress without cause.

**Psalms 36:9** (Light): For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

**Psalms 97:11** (Light): Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.

**Isaiah 45:22** (Parallel theme): Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.

**Isaiah 60:5** (Parallel theme): Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.

**Psalms 13:3** (Light): Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;

**Psalms 83:16** (Parallel theme): Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD.

**Esther 8:16** (Light): The Jews had light, and gladness, and joy, and honour.

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