

# *The Church of God*

(La Iglesia de Dios)

## Has God Appeared in Physical Form? – By Don Roth

### HAS GOD APPEARED IN PHYSICAL FORM?

(Bible verses quoted are from NKJV unless otherwise noted)

Does the Bible ever show God in a human form walking and talking with man? Or was He some shadowy voice as portrayed in the movies? The Bible tells us that God both walked and talked among men many times. Because of this, an important question needs to be asked: “Why did God choose to walk and talk among man in the form of a man so that He appeared as a man?”

**Genesis 3:8** *“And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.”* We see that God was walking in the garden, and Adam and Eve heard the sound of His walking. Some translations—one of which translates the word for “sound” as voice— want us to believe that God’s voice was walking when in fact it was God in a human form that was doing the walking. The fact that God walked this earth in a human form and talked with certain men and women both in the New and Old Testament will be proven true by a substantial number of these encounters that are plainly recorded in your Bible. In the past some may have read over these accounts without accepting them as factual, not understanding the importance that God placed on these meetings. Did God ever deal directly with people?

First, we must understand the word “walking.” It is interesting in that it carries two important meanings. This word also has two Strong numbers: #H1980 and #H3212, both of which have the same Hebrew word as their source. This word not only represents the physical action of walking but also the theological idea of being in agreement with a fellow traveler, either for good or bad.

### THE BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF WALKING TOGETHER

Obviously, one would not be walking and communing closely with one who has a different standard of life. Biblical examples are “Enoch walked with God” and “Noah walked with God.” **Amos 3:3** *“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”* If one is going to walk with another, they need an appointed time to do so. To walk with God one would need to meet Him at His appointed times. Does it seem so irreligious that God would not have had a physical presence for Adam and Eve to see? This also applies to Cain and Abel at the time they brought an offering to God. **Genesis 4:4** *“Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering.”*

The two words used here when understood, will greatly add to the significance of what is being said. The word “offering” is Strong’s #H4503 (TWOT 1214a page 514) and has the following meaning. Quoting from The Theological Word Book of the Old Testament (TWOT): “A Hebrew root mnh ‘to

give.’ The Arabic manaha has the technical meaning ‘to lend someone something’ (e.g. a she-camel, goat, sheep or parcel of land) for a limited period of time so that the borrower can have free use of the produce of the loan (e.g. the offspring, milk, crops, etc.), and then return the original property. The fruit then becomes a free gift.”

It is not difficult to understand that this was a required gift to God. It was He who was the originator who gave the animals, the land, and the seed for men to use. Abel’s gift was from the best of his flock, showing his love and respect for the Creator. On the other hand, Cain gave some of what he had grown, but it was not part of the first fruits of his produce.

Cain was a tiller of the ground; he may not have had any animals to bring as an offering. It can be speculated that he may have had a few animals for his own use, but that is not recorded in Genesis. The problem was not that Cain did not bring animals to sacrifice but one of quality. The Bible differentiates between Cain and Able by their occupations. The first fruits of one’s occupation belong to God. The Bible account in Genesis makes it clear that Able indeed brought the best of his first fruits, but nothing is mentioned about Cain’s offering being the best of his first fruits. This is the reason for God’s displeasure with Cain—not that he did not provide an animal.

The parallel for this becomes clear. In our lifetime we have the use of the creation that we had nothing to do with having it brought into existence. This is the loan from God which covers our lifetime on this earth.

The word “respected” is Strong’s #H8159 meaning to look on with approval and regard. Notice that this approval was not communicated with words, but by God appearing pleased. This was not a superficial glance; but a penetrating investigation of what was offered and the thoughts that prompted each man’s offering. A person can give their approval or disapproval just by their facial expression, again showing God’s physical presence. Cain’s offering was not respected. This word is a combination of two Hebrew words #H8159 and #H3808 (an emphatic negative meaning “no” or “not).

## GOD’S WAY

Not until the reason for God’s disapproval needed to be made clear to Cain that the spoken word was needed. God explains in the Bible that there are only two ways to live your life. One is that you have a desire to please God by following His way of life, which will result in a life of satisfaction and promise for you. Abel’s offering exemplified his love and respect for his Maker by sacrificing the best living animal he had. The second way, a life of sin, is exemplified by Cain, who lived a life of competition, which resulted in breaking God’s laws. If you are breaking God’s law, you are sinning! **1 John 3:4** **“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.”** Sin is the transgression of the law, including stealing, adultery, bowing down to false gods, etc.

Why is this world filled with pain, suffering, and empty meaningless lives? The answer is very simple. God’s laws are being broken with impunity. Cain looked on his brother as a competitor for the approval of God, which is the way of this world. His solution was simple: eliminate the competition; so he killed his brother, thinking, “Now God will only have me to look upon.”

## ABRAHAM AND MELCHIZEDEK

The idea that God appeared in the form of a man is well documented. In the Old Testament we have Abraham returning from his victory over Chedorlaomer and the Kings. **Genesis 14:18-20** *“Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said: ‘Blessed be Abram [Abraham] of God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; And blessed be God Most High, Who has delivered your enemies into your hand.’ And he gave Him a tithe of all.”* Again, we find God presenting himself to Abraham in the form of a man in **Genesis 18:2-3** *“So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, and said, ‘My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant’”* Note that Abraham bowed, #H7812, meaning to prostrate oneself. If he were bowing to an angel, he would have been told not to do so by that being, leaving one with the answer: Abraham prostrated himself before God.

God also continues to inform Abraham of his intention to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 18:20-22** *“And the LORD said, ‘Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grave, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, I will know.’ Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD.”* As we see here, not only does God converse with Abraham, but He is also before him in a physical form.

Another point to be made is that Abraham had immediate recognition of who was in front of him without any verbal communication. He bows (prostrates himself) before this individual. The only one that Abraham had dealt with previously was Melchizedek, who was named the King of Salem, and priest of the Most High God. As has been noted in **Hebrews 7:2** Paul gives the correct interpretation of **Genesis 14:18**. This was no human that Abraham was dealing with. No one is righteous, pointed out by **Romans 3:10** *“As it is written: THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE;”*

## PAUL TELLS US WHO MELCHIZEDEK WAS

So, who was this being coming to Abraham in the form of a man? We find the answer in the New Testament. **Hebrews 7:1-4** *“For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated “king of righteousness,” and then also king of Salem, meaning “king of peace,” without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.”* [This is a direct reference to Christ and His priesthood.] *“Now consider how great this man was, to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the spoils.”* “Man” should be translated as “one.” The reason for not using “man” is that this word is Strong’s #H3778 and is a demonstrative pronoun, “this” or “that.” The word “man” was added! Can someone be called a “man” who has no father or mother? Therefore, the word “one” should be used. These verses show that Melchizedek and Christ are one and the same.

## WHO WAS KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND KING OF PEACE?

In addition, Paul uses two important titles when describing Melchizedek: “The King of Righteousness, and the King of Peace.” Who is the exclusive user of these titles? **Isaiah 9:6-7** ***“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.”***

**Jeremiah 23:5-6** ***“Behold, the days are coming says the LORD, ‘That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness; A King shall reign and prosper, And execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely; Now this is His name by which He will be called: THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”***

This is also confirmed by **1 Corinthians 10:1-4** ***“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.”***

#### MELCHIZEDEK POSSESSED ETERNAL LIFE

Paul states in the last half of **Hebrews 7:3** that Melchizedek has neither beginning of day or end of life. There are two supporting scriptures for this statement. **Micah 5:2** ***“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”*** **Revelation 1:8** ***“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End “says the Lord, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”***

In the strongest possible terms Paul is pointing out that Melchizedek (before His birth as the Christ child) and Jesus Christ are one and the same. All references from both the New and Old Testaments prove that this is factual.

#### JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

**Genesis 32:24 & 30** ***“Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day. So Jacob called the name of the place Penile: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”*** This is a remarkable account in which God has a very physical intense contact with Jacob showing his physical presence to be quite real. God was testing Jacob’s tenacity. The fact that Jacob would not relent without receiving a blessing from God, even when he was in pain, demonstrated that he knew beforehand that he would not be able to return to the Promised Land without that blessing.

God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, and gave him the blessing that he asked for, resulting in his war-like brother, Esau, greeting him with friendship.

These scriptures show that Christ was the God who dealt with the nation of Israel, as well as with the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

### CHRIST APPEARS AFTER HIS DEATH

Do we find Christ appearing in the form of a man after His death in the New Testament? In **John 20** Christ appeared first to Mary, and then to His disciples by manifesting Himself to them despite the closed doors. Also, in **Luke 24:13-15 & 30-31** we find Christ appearing after His death, ***“Now behold, two of them [disciples, but not of the original twelve] were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.”*** Again, in **John 20** we find the account of doubting Thomas. **John 20:27** ***“Then He said to Thomas, “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.”*** Here Christ appears in the same physical condition that He was in at His death. Obviously the two disciples of the Emmaus account could not have missed seeing the nail holes in His hands and feet if He would have had them at that time. As the resurrected Son of God, being God, He could appear in any physical condition He chose. His appearance was not restricted to His disciples. Paul records for us that over 500 people also saw Christ after his death. **I Corinthians 15:4-6** ***“and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep.”*** Just as Christ after His death appeared in the form of a man, so He also appeared to Adam and Eve, to Cain and Abel, to Enoch and Noah, and also to Abraham and Sarah.

Going back to Jacob’s encounter with God, the claim is made by some that Jacob could not have seen God, because it seems to contradict the statement in **John 6:46** which says, ***“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father.”***

### SEEING GOD IN HIS SPIRIT FORM

There is also the example of Moses seeing God as a glorious Spirit Being in **Exodus 33:18-23** ***“And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’ Then He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ But He said, ‘you cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live.’ And the LORD said, ‘Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen.’”***

Remembering all the examples that have been cited, a disconnect is seen with Christ’s statement in **John 6** where He tells us that no one has seen the Father except Himself. One of Christ’s important jobs was to reveal the Father, and His statement that “no one” is an absolute, unconditional “no.” **Matthew 11:27** ***“All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.”*** All the encounters herein described with someone could only have been one other than the Father. The only other God would be Christ, as has been

shown. He pointed this out in **John 6**, removing all doubt about who He was before His birth as Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

Why did Christ walk and talk to these men and women in a form that presented God as a man, just as they looked, walked, and talked? He could have presented Himself as He did in **Exodus 20:18-19** ***“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’”***

Was God searching out a people who would believe Him out of fear? Is He now searching out a people who would believe in the magnificent set of principles that He taught as He walked and talked with man?

This is answered in **Genesis 26:2-5** ***“Then the LORD appeared to him and said: ‘Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.’”***

It was through experiences and trials that God taught Abraham and Sarah. Today we have the written word of God as explained by the writings of Paul in **I Corinthians 10:6-11** ***“Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, ‘THE PEOPLE SAT DOWN TO EAT AND DRINK, AND ROSE UP TO PLAY.’ Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell; nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents; nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer. Now all of these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.”***

God gives two ways of learning; one is by studying the examples of the Bible to see the historic record to avoid the pitfalls that ended their lives in pain and misery. The alternative is to learn by making our own mistakes and suffering the results. Paul gives an important option in **I Corinthians 10:12-13**. ***Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”***

What will YOUR decision be?

Don Roth (Revised 6-11-21)