

Did God Manifest in a Physical Form?

Does the bible ever show God in a human form walking and talking with us? 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 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 or that God did this for an important reason. 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; 1980 and 3212, 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.

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 word respected is Strong’s #8159; it means 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 #8159 and #3808. Number 3808 is an emphatic negative meaning “no” or “not.”

It wasn’t 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 animals 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 transgressions of the law.

Why is this world filled with pain and suffering, with empty meaningless lives? The answer is very simple; God’s laws are being broken with impunity. Cain looked on his brother as competition for the approval of God, which is the way of this world. His solution was simple; eliminate the competition, so he killed his brother.

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.”* 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 (before) 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””* 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.

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 #3778 and is a demonstrative pronoun, “this or that.” The word man was added. Can one 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.

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.”* This scripture shows that Christ was the God who dealt with the nation of Israel, as well as the patriarchs of the Old Testament.

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.

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 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.”*

There is also the example of Moses seeing God as a glorious Spirit Being in Ex. 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.” Mat 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.

Returning to the original question of why did God in almost all cases appear as an ordinary man. By looking more closely at what happened in the garden when Satan appeared before Eve the answer will be revealed.

In most translations, a snake is found talking to Eve; which in general, is thought to be one of the most repulsive animals of the animal kingdom. Yet, at that time all animals lived in peace and harmony with man. Genesis 1:30 *“Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food”; and it was so.”* Adam and Eve were living in a peaceful and idyllic world. So what would have impressed Eve to the point of believing a talking snake? From the Companion Bible we learn that the word for snake is Nachash, the shining one.

II Cor 11:3, 14 *“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ... And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.”* Eze 28:13 *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, Beryl, onyx, and jasper, Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.”* It is not

hard to understand why Eve was taken in by this dazzling being. Satan wanted to impress Eve with his dazzling appearance; but God uses the word “snake” as a word picture of Satan’s real character. It was not only his appearance that Eve had to deal with; but a very formidable mental challenge. God tells us in I Tim 2:13-14 *“For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”* The new question should be why Adam was not deceived and Eve was? Paul is leading us to the answer by reminding us that Adam was created first. Adam was an eyewitness to something that Eve would only have been told. He saw God create the garden, he saw adult trees planted, a surrounding stone wall erected, not through physical labor, but by the spoken word.

When Gen 3:1 is more carefully examined, *“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?’”*, the word “beast” #2416 and the word “field” #7704 does not just mean the animals of the physical world, but all the beings that God created that included the angelic realm. Eve was impressed by what she saw, this brilliant being. For her, who was more believable? God appearing as a man or Satan as this brilliant angelic being? She made the choice by appearance, and herein lies the answer to the initial question “why did God choose to appear to man in the form of a man?.” The answer is fundamental to the very purpose that God is working out here on this creation. He wanted man to believe him because of the substance of what he was teaching. It must be remembered that the book of Genesis, like the rest of the books of the bible, does not contain all the details that went on during the creation week and what followed those first seven days.

Were Adam and Eve taught by God before Satan’s attack? The answer is found in Genesis 2:3 *“Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.”* The word “blessed,” #1288 carries the understanding of being given the power of success. Further, the word “sanctified” can be understood by its definition found in Eph 5:25-26 *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”* Our minds are cleaned up by the word of God. If God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, it means that he gave its meaning to Adam and Eve. The summary of the message God gave to Adam and Eve is, *“I am the one who made everything your eyes will see. Adam, remember how you searched through all the animals and found none that could be a helpmate for you. There was no Eve among them. I made Eve out of your bone, you must know me as your creator, you must respect Me as your life giver, your God.”*

When reading Genesis 3, it appears that Satan shows himself on the eighth day. The truth is that the bible does not say this. This is an incorrect assumption that most people make. By thinking this, are we accusing God of allowing Satan, a supreme liar, to lead Adam and Eve into the penalty of death, without first teaching them the way of life? Satan can do nothing without God’s approval. Recall how Satan wanted to destroy Job but could do nothing without God’s approval. As this applies to Job, it also applies to Adam and Eve and each one of us. The New Testament supports this belief in John 15:1-2 *“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”* This supports the realization that an unspecified amount of time was needed to teach Adam and Eve the way of life; preparing them for the monumental test with Satan.

It is the father who chooses us, and then develops our character through real life situations. It is the son, the word who feeds us truth so that we can make the right life decisions. Christ is the teacher and by example shows us the way to live our lives. Mat 7:13-14 *“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”* Unlike Satan, God appeared as a man because he wanted Adam and Eve to believe the substance of what he taught and not be affected by the brilliance of

appearance. God wanted them to choose that narrow way which leads to life because it results in what man has spent his whole history trying to find, to be able to live forever – eternal life.

There are few that understand that the two trees in the garden represent two ways to live one's life. The tree of life represented God's way of outgoing concern and respect for the individual. This would result in a society in peace and harmony; a society that knows who is responsible for its origins, and that knows a loving and concerned God made this earth and gave them life.