

Doctrine of God

Does God Have a Body?

1. The Jehovah Witnesses, Mormons and other Cults contend that God has a body based upon selected Scripture.
 - The Voice of God. *Genesis 3:8 And they heard the voice 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 amongst the trees of the garden.*
 - The Face of God. *Exodus 33:11 And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.*
 - The Hand of God. *Exodus 33:22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:*
 - The Backside of God. *Exodus 33:23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*
 - The Standing Presence of God. *Exodus 34:5 And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord.*
 - The Feet of God. *Deuteronomy 23:12 Thou shalt have a place also without the camp, whither thou shalt go forth abroad: 13 And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon; and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back and cover that which cometh from thee: 14 For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.*
2. If these body parts are a literal description of anatomical makeup of God then other passages would indicate some amazing parts.
 - God has Feathers. *Psalms 91:4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*
 - God has Horns. *Habakkuk 3:3 God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. 4 And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power.*
3. Jesus taught that God the Father is spirit.

- *John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*
4. A spirit has no body parts.
- *Luke 24:39 [Jesus said,] Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*
5. No one has ever heard the voice of God nor seen His shape.
- *John 5:37 And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.*
6. One of the greatest sins of fallen humanity is to change the real image of God.
- *Romans 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things.*
7. What is a body? Scientifically, we would say that a body has mass.
8. What is a spirit? A spirit is a being without a body; to be a spirit means to *not have* a body, as Jesus explained to His disciples:
- *Luke 24:36 And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. 37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. 38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*
9. The reasoning of the cults is along the following thought: *"It can be seen that where there is intelligence there is a mind. And we know that where there is a mind there is a brain in a body of a definite shape."*
10. However, this is not true. We do *not* know that where there is a mind there is a brain in a body of a definite shape. We only know that where there is a *human* mind, in this life, on this world, there is a brain in a body of a definite shape.
11. Since our knowledge of life and the universe is limited we should not assert there cannot be minds without brains and for good reason. A thought does not have a definite shape. Nor does a thought have mass or take up space and yet it is very real.
12. Perhaps God has a spiritual body which does have shape and size as per 1 Corinthians 15:44.
- *1 Corinthians 15:44 It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is*

a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

13. In context a spiritual body is a physical body that has been glorified by the Holy Spirit to enter into the heavenly realm. This glorified body is no longer limited to the restrictions of this universe's space-time continuum.
14. To be "*spiritual*" does not mean to be "*a spirit*."
15. "Spiritual" is an adjective and in 1 Corinthians 15 modifies "body."
16. You can be spiritual without being a spirit, just like you can be musical without being music, or fiery without being fire. Which brings us to an illustration: If I heat a piece of metal in fire, it will take on the characteristics of fire. It will glow and if you touch a paper to it, the paper will catch on fire. But the metal has not become fire; it is still metal. So it is with a spiritual body. It is still a body (something extended in space) although it is so united to the spirit, so perfectly animated by the spirit, that it takes on characteristics of spirit such as not being limited by time and space and being able to dwell in heaven. To have such a body, the kind of body Jesus has, is our hope, "the hope of glory" Colossians 1:27.
17. But God the Father does not have such a body. He is pure spirit. God *is* spirit, not that he has a spirit. Since he is spirit, he lacks parts or a body, entirely.
18. That is to say, a bodily state is not the state in which God has existed from eternity.
19. God has existed in eternity as pure spirit, even though in the Son, he chose to take on human nature in addition to his non-corporeal nature.
20. God the Son, in His incarnate state as Jesus, took *on the form* of a human being. We read in Philippians 2:5-8 that "*Jesus Christ: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross.*" He did not have a body in eternity past – he had to take on this form.
21. The book of John is a confirmation of the fact that Jesus existed as God in a glorified state before his incarnation – before becoming a human being (John 1:1, 14).
22. He *became* flesh – he was not already flesh.
23. God took on the form of a human being in his Son, Jesus Christ, in order to communicate directly with us and to complete our redemption.
24. But what is to be said of those passages that seem to speak of God in human terms?

25. Those expressions are called anthropomorphisms, that is, descriptions of God's being, actions and emotions put in human terms.
26. Though God is without a body, his acts for his people are said to be by "his mighty arm" (Exodus 15:16).
27. God is also pictured as having a face, hands, fingers and a back.
- The face of God. *Psalms 27:8 When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*
 - The hand of God. *Psalms 10:12 Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.*
 - The memory of God. *Psalms 88:5 Free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, whom thou rememberest no more: and they are cut off from thy hand.*
 - The finger of God. *Deuteronomy 9:10 And the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the Lord spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly.*
 - The backside of God. *Exodus 33:23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.*
28. As well, God is described as talking, walking, laughing, and weeping.
29. Such anthropomorphisms are poetic symbols or metaphors representing that which would otherwise be indescribable, because God in his being is invisible and unknown.
30. Such symbols of God's being are condescension to us – put in words that we can understand.
31. We have to have some way of describing God's relationship to us. The only way this can occur is through symbols that are understandable to our finite minds and experience. Consider that it would be logically impossible for God to be a six-foot-four inch (or whatever height and weight) individual with a body of flesh and bone.
32. Unless God were a hermaphrodite – having both male and female sexual organs – the scripture that is sometimes cited as "*proof*" of God having a human-shaped body – would be reduced to an absurdity. Genesis 1:27 has God saying that he created *both* males and females in his image.
- *Genesis 1:27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.*

33. The nature and size of the universe itself tells us that it would be impossible that a God made in the image of humans could create, maintain and control the universe.
34. How could God, as a human-sized being, direct a universe of 10-12 billion light years across?
35. He would be incomprehensibly dwarfed by the universe, as we humans are. Yet, precisely the opposite is said of God – that the universe cannot contain *him*.
 - *2 Chronicles 2:6 But who is able to build him an house, seeing the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain him? Who am I then, that I should build him an house, save only to burn sacrifice before him?*
36. Literal anthropomorphism, as mentioned earlier, makes God in our image and forgets that we are made in his image – which has reference not to shape, size or composition, but to something of his spiritual qualities.
37. Human beings have been given the ability to reason and to express many divine qualities, such as communication, invention and the creation of new things, but only from existing materials.
38. God has also given humanity dominion and stewardship over his creation, which shows humanity's place as ruler and king, much like God.
39. This is the meaning of God creating us "*in his own image*," not that God is like humans in having bodily parts and shape.
40. Paul explains that literal anthropomorphism is a dangerous and pagan doctrine that we should avoid.
41. He explains what happened in human philosophy and religion:
 - *Romans 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.*