

God Has a Physical Body — Cheat Sheet

exegesis.

CORE POSITION (ONE SENTENCE)

The Bible repeatedly describes God in physical, embodied terms; the doctrine of divine incorporeality is a product of Greek philosophical influence, not biblical

KEY FACTS

- John 4:24 is about the mode of worship ("worship in spirit and truth"), not a metaphysical definition of God's nature
- The Greek *pneuma ho theos* is a qualitative predicate — like "God is light" (1 John 1:5) or "God is love" (1 John 4:8) — describing an attribute, not excluding embodiment

- The resurrected Christ has "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39) yet is called a "life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45) — "spirit" does not preclude a body
- Tertullian (c. 200 AD) explicitly affirmed God has a body (*Against Praxeas*, 7)
- Augustine acknowledged his incorporealism came from "the books of the Platonists," not scripture (*Confessions* 7.9)
- Fourth-century Anthropomorphite monks represent an older tradition of embodied theology that was suppressed by the philosophical party

THEIR PROOF-TEXTS — AND RESPONSES

Verse	Their Claim	Response
John 4:24	"God is a Spirit" = incorporeal	Qualitative statement about worship. "God is light" doesn't make God a photon.
John 1:18	"No man hath seen God" = invisible/bodyless	Contradicted by Ex. 24:9-11, Ex. 33:11, Gen. 32:30. God is not <i>casually</i> visible — He can reveal Himself.
1 Tim. 6:16	God "whom no man hath seen, nor can see"	Same resolution — divine glory is overwhelming, not nonexistent. Moses needed to be shielded (Ex. 33:20-22).
Col. 1:15	"The invisible God"	"Invisible" describes default state, not ontological impossibility. Christ is "the image of the invisible God" — how does an incorporeal being have an image?
Jer. 23:24	"Do not I fill heaven and earth?" = omnipresent = no body	Omnipresence = God's power/awareness everywhere, not physical extension. Even classical theology doesn't mean God is physically smeared across space.

BEST SCRIPTURES (EMBODIED GOD)

- **Genesis 1:26-27** — Humanity made in God's "image" (*tselem* = physical likeness)
- **Exodus 24:9-11** — Moses, Aaron, and 70 elders *see* God; under His feet a sapphire pavement
- **Exodus 33:20-23** — God's "hand," "back parts" — physical descriptions

- **Exodus 33:11** — God speaks to Moses "face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend"
- **Acts 7:55-56** — Stephen sees God and Jesus as two distinct visible beings
- **Daniel 7:9** — Ancient of Days: hair like wool, white garments, sits on a throne
- **Ezekiel 1:26-28** — "The appearance of a man" on the throne = the glory of the Lord
- **Philippians 3:21** — Our bodies will be "fashioned like unto his glorious body"
- **1 Cor. 15:44** — Resurrected = "spiritual body" — still a body
- **D&C 130:22** — "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's"

EARLY CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE

Source	Position	Significance
Tertullian (c. 200)	"God is a body...Spirit has a bodily substance" (<i>Against Praxeas</i> 7)	Major Latin theologian affirmed embodiment
Anthropomorphite monks (c. 399)	Prayed to embodied God; wept when told to stop	Older tradition suppressed by Origenist party
Origen (c. 230)	First systematic incorporealist	Drew heavily on Platonic philosophy
Augustine (c. 400)	Acknowledged Platonists taught him incorporeality	Philosophical source, not scriptural
Nicene/Chalcedonian Creeds	Affirm incorporeality	Products of philosophical councils, not scripture

ONE-LINE RESPONSES

- **"God is a Spirit."** — And "God is love." That doesn't make Him an emotion. It's a quality, not an exhaustive definition.
- **"No man has seen God."** — Then what happened in Exodus 24, 33, Genesis 32, Isaiah 6, and Acts 7?

- **"A body can't be omnipresent."** — Omnipresence is about God's power and awareness, not physical extension. Even classical theology doesn't claim God is physically at every point.
- **"Every Christian creed says God is incorporeal."** — Creeds are human documents shaped by Greek philosophy. The question is what the Bible says.
- **"This is a Joseph Smith invention."** — Tertullian said it in 200 AD. The Anthropomorphites believed it in 399 AD. Incorporeality was the innovation.

FURTHER READING

- [FAIR: Does God Have a Body?](#)

- [FAIR: John 4:24](#)