

We are made in the image of God, and from the beginning He revealed Himself to us like a person (Genesis 3:8-11). Adam and Eve walked and talked with Him in Eden before the fall.

Genesis 2:22 YHVH Elohim built the rib, which He had taken from the man, into a woman. Then **He** brought her to the man.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of YHVH Elohim going to and fro in the garden in the cool evening breeze of the day. So the man and his wife hid themselves from the **presence** of YHVH Elohim in the midst of the Tree of the garden.

Another time of face-to-face with God happened to Abraham, before the destruction of Sodom.

Genesis 18:2 Abraham looked up, and suddenly, three men were standing right by him. When he saw them, he ran from the entrance of his tent to meet them and bowed down to the ground.

Yup. Me, too. If I saw YHVH suddenly appear a respectful distance in front of my tent, I would run, too!

There are several important points in this passage - but those are rabbit holes for another time. Just focus that YHVH appeared as a man, and then Abraham bargained with Him!

The Father spoke with Moses and others, and the Spirit often communicated, but in the wilderness it was the pillar of cloud (and fire) that was the visible presence of YHVH, and He dwelled with God's followers who were in their booths or tents.

YHVH was the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night.

Exodus 13:21-22 YHVH went before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead the way and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light. So they could travel both day and night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night never departed from the people.

Exodus 14:19-20 Then the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them. Also the pillar of cloud moved from in front and stood behind them, and so came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel - there was the cloud and the darkness over here, yet it gave light by night over there - neither one came near the other all night long.

Exodus 14:24-25 Now it came about during the morning watch that YHVH looked at the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud and caused the army of the Egyptians to panic. He took off their chariot wheels and caused them to drive heavily, so that the Egyptians said, "Get away from the presence of Israel! For YHVH fights for them against the Egyptians!"

Exodus 33:7-11 *especially 9 & 11:* After Moses entered, the pillar of cloud descended, stood at the door, and He would speak with Moses. So YHVH spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend.

When the new Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) was completed and dedicated, the presence of God filled it such that no one could enter it!

Exodus 40:34-35 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of YHVH filled the Tabernacle. Moses was unable to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud resided there and the glory of YHVH filled the Tabernacle.

All the surrounding nations knew about the presence of YHVH.

Numbers 14:14 They will tell the residents of this land about it. Already they have heard that You, YHVH, are in the midst of this people, that You, YHVH, have been seen eye to eye, that Your cloud remains over them, and that in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night You go before them.

Yeshua was born just like each of us, from the womb of His mother, Miriam. His primary purpose (but only one of many) was to pay the price of redemption for sin. Only a sinless man could pay that penalty (representing both sexes because a man has X and Y chromosomes). Angels can not; animals are substitutes for the final payment.

Genesis 2:17 But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil you must not eat. For when you eat from it, you most assuredly will die!

Deuteronomy 24:16 Fathers are not to be put to death for children, and children are not to be put to death for fathers - each one is to be put to death for his own sin.

Leviticus 1:4 The person bringing it is to lay his hand upon its head, and it then becomes his substitute: the death of the animal will be accepted by God instead of the death of the man who brings it, as the penalty for his sins.

Hebrews 9:12 Messiah entered the most holy place once for all time, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

The birth of Messiah happened at this time of year, on Sukkot. But why did it happen during the Roman Empire?

Because *Pax Romana* was a time of relative peace in all western civilization from 27 BC through 180 AD. The Romans

built amazing roads (some are still in use), and had peacekeeping forces along those roads, so travel of great distances was possible with a sense of safety. Thus the Good News could also travel far and fast!

What about the Roman census? How did that determine the time of year for the birth of Yeshua? The Romans knew the Jews came together three times each year, so they took advantage of that. They were not in a big hurry like we are today, so they could wait a year or two for results.

What about the stable? A sukkah is similar to a stable, so this is not an issue - yes, animals could have been in the area.

Luke 2:1-4

Now it happened in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus to register all the world's inhabitants. This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria. Everyone was traveling to be registered in his own city. Now Joseph also went up from the Galilee, out of the town of Natzeret to Judah, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was from the house and family of David.

Luke 2:6

But while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

Luke 2:21

When eight days had passed for His brit-milah, He was named Yeshua, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. [Also the eighth day of Sukkot.]

He became one of us, to serve the sentence of death required by Genesis 3, and to show us how to live:

Philippians 2:5-11

Have this attitude in yourselves, which also was in Messiah Yeshua, Who, though existing in the form of God, did not consider being equal to God a thing to be grasped or clenched. But He emptied Himself - taking on the form of a slave, becoming the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself - becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Yeshua every knee should bow, in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and every tongue profess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord - to the glory of God the Father.

Today our connection with God is through His Spirit, as the Spirit moves on us and in us when we read the Word of God, and when we pray to connect our thoughts to His ways. The Father is the ultimate connection, as we learned when persons connected with "the Angel of YHVH" but lived to tell about it. In John's gospel we learn very specifically of that relation to the Father. Messiah was speaking during Chanukah:

John 10:30

I and the Father are one.

Later Yeshua expands on this, saying that those who believe in Him are also one in the Father.

John 17:21

Just as You, Father, are in Me and I am in You, so also may they be one in Us, so the world may believe that You sent Me.

When we study the Bible (the Spirit reveals Yeshua in the Word), we connect with the Father.

Colossians 2:9

The entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Messiah.

When we speak of Sukkot, of the time in booths for forty years, when we were totally dependent on God for our daily survival as well as our protection from attacks, we also speak of our continuing dependence on His love for us. Our obedience guides us in the path that is best for us (please note: that does not mean it is painless - it is still a fallen world inhabited by fallen people like me and like you). Let's stay on course, and help others to do the same along the way!

This is our perpetual celebration - God with us!