

## **LESSON 30 - THE IMAGE OF GOD**

### **How Is Jesus The Exclusive Manifest Image Of God?**

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**T**he Bible says God created all humans in His image and likeness. Does the Bible teach that God has a physical, human-like appearance? In what ways exactly do humans share in His image and likeness? The Bible also says Jesus is the image of God—but in a way that is eternal, one-of-a-kind, and extraordinary. How *is* Jesus the exclusive manifest image of God? Today you’ll learn these answers and why Jesus is glorious and deserving of all of our worship.

***1. Does God have a Physical, Human-like Appearance?*** No, He doesn’t. God existed before there was physicality. He existed eternally, long before He created a physical universe or any of the physical things within it. He’s not physical at all. The laws of physics do not apply to Him because He created them! Ephesians 4:6 says there’s, “*one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*” John 4:24 and 2 Corinthians 3:17 tell us how this is possible, because “*God is spirit*” and “*the Lord is the Spirit.*” 1 Timothy 1:17, Romans 1:20, and Colossians 1:15 all say “God is invisible.” God boasts of these very points Himself in Job 11:7-9 saying, “*Can you find out the limit of the Almighty? It is higher than heaven—what can you do? Deeper than Sheol—what can you know? Its measure is longer than the earth and broader than the sea.*” If God did have physical or other limitations, God wouldn’t make statements like these, or it would make God a liar. It is precisely because God does *not* look like a human, or any created thing, that He detests idolatry. Deuteronomy 4:15-18 says, “*Watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly by making a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female.*” Deuteronomy 4:36 says, “*Out of heaven he let you hear his voice... And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire.*” Romans 1:22-23 says of humans, “*They became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.*” God is invisible, formless, and omnipresent. To create any type of image, statue, or idol of Him with human-like features or limitations is an insult to the infinite, almighty, limitless God who is the creator of all other things.

***2. How Are Humans IN The Image of God?*** Genesis 1:26-27 says, “*Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*” By “image” God means “likeness.” See Genesis 5:1-3, 9:6, James 3:9.

Humans share in God's likeness in a number of physical, mental, and emotional abilities: intelligence, physical abilities, unique talents, emotional depth, capacity for relationship, memories, values, passions, ambitions, wisdom, and creativity. God also gave us a spiritual nature similar to His. We can love, connect to, and form spiritual relationships with God and other spiritual beings. We have spiritual senses that can experience the manifest presence of God, have encounters with God or angels in dreams and visions, or recognize the Holy Spirit's guidance within us. We have a conscience, God's moral law written on our hearts, to help guide our decisions. All these capabilities make us less like nature or the animals and more like God and the other spiritual beings that He created (the angels). These attributes, as part of God's likeness, enables humans to handle the responsibility of dominion over the earth.

**3. How is Jesus THE Exclusive Manifest Image of God?** There has always and will only ever be, ONE God, and He ALONE creates and sustains everything. In Isaiah 44:6 God says, *"I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god,"* and in Isaiah 43:10, *"Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."* Acts 7:49-50 quotes God, *"Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What kind of house will you build for me, says the Lord... Did not my hand make all these things?"* Psalm 33:6 says, *"By the WORD of the LORD the heavens were made."* Acts 4:24 says, *"God... who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them."* God alone created everything, yet, Colossians 1:15-16 says of Jesus, *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."* "Firstborn," in Jesus's case, doesn't mean first to be birthed or created. Firstborn means not just chronologically in time, but superior in privilege and authority. Jesus is eternally God's firstborn. The Son is preeminent and heir to all that is the Father's. All creation was made *through* Jesus and *for* Jesus. Everything was made *for* Him! How is Jesus the image of God? Consider how your thoughts and words are an expression of you. This is similar to the way that The Word (the Son/Jesus) is the expression of God. John 1:1-3, 14, 18 says of Jesus, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made... the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."* There is one God and He exists, eternally, as three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The invisible, formless Almighty God is more like a limitless mind. God has revealed Himself to His creation through His Word. Not just through His written word alone, but through His entire logos, through relationship and His manifest presence. The Son is the mind of the Father in tangible form. The Word of God personified. The Son makes the Father knowable, and the Holy Spirit makes the Son knowable (Matthew 11:27, John 16:14-15). Hebrews 1:2-3 says Jesus, *"his Son... heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power."*

Let's pray. Jesus, I believe You are of the exact divine nature as God Almighty. You're the eternal, exclusive Son of God. I give You all glory, honor, and worship. I adore You my Lord and Savior. Amen.