

GOD LOOKS LIKE JESUS

John 14:8-9

Exodus chapters 33-34 narrate the unexpected and dramatic moment God revealed Himself to Moses. Yielding to Moses' intercessions, God agreed to spare Israel following their egregious violation of its newly enacted covenant relationship with Him. Not only did God mercifully spare the nation, but He also graciously permitted Moses to see His glory. However, God only allowed Moses a glimpse of His "back" because of the danger it posed for him. That risk emphasizes the surprising nature of Jesus' identity in the New Testament – *he is God in human form*. Jesus' identity thus affords us a perspective even Moses did not enjoy because *God looks like Jesus*. Therefore, we can see God's merciful, gracious, patient, loving, faithful, and forgiving identity fully embodied in the gospels' record of Jesus' life and teachings. This lesson introduces a short series exploring how Jesus reveals God to us, beginning by considering Jesus' divine identity and its significance for our lives.

"Conformed to the image of his Son"¹

God made humanity "in his own image" (*Genesis 1:27*), a description that focuses on humanity's responsibility to rule the world in ways that faithfully represents God's will in the world (*Genesis 1:26-28*). Humanity's responsibility extends beyond representing God's authority; it also includes representing His person - humanity embodies God by modeling His character in their lives (*cf. Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 4:1-8*). Rather than exercising rule through a relationship of obedience to God, humanity instead tried to seize power separate from God (*Genesis 3:1-6*). Humanity's rebellion separated them from God and twisted their identity – they became people characterized by evil and violence rather than goodness and life (*Genesis 6:5, 11*).

Despite their evil and violence, God did not abandon His rebellious humans. Instead, He introduced a plan to restore humanity to its role representing His will and person in the world (*Genesis 12:1-3; 1:26-28*). That plan moves through Jesus (*Genesis 12:1-3; 22:18; Galatians 3:16*), in whom God reveals Himself and through whom we can recover our image-bearing purpose. Consider the following:

First, Jesus is God.

John 8:58-59

John 1:1, 14

¹ Romans 8:29. All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.



Hebrews 1:3
Colossians 1:15
Colossians 2:9
John 14:8-9

Second, because He reveals Himself through Jesus, God expects us to become like Jesus.

Romans 8:29
Galatians 3:27
Philippians 2:5
Ephesians 4:15
Ephesians 5:1-2

Third, through Jesus, we become people (re)made in God's image.

Colossians 2:11-12
Colossians 3:9-10
Colossians 1:15

Applications

While important, Christianity does not focus first on being 'good,' 'righteous,' or 'holy.' Instead, **Christianity's** goal centers on being like **Jesus**. Because Jesus is our goal, we should:

- Trust that he knows better than we do about how we should think and live (*Colossians 2:3*).
- Trace our beliefs and practices to him (*cf. Colossians 3:15-17*).
- Anchor our lives to the weightier matters he prioritized (*Matthew 22:34-40; 23:23*).
- Accept that following Jesus takes priority over every other person and thing in our lives (*Matthew 10:34-39*).
- Recognize that identity, meaning, and purpose reside in being like him rather than 'being true to ourselves.'

