

What Is Your Future ... to Become God?

Does Scripture Teach That Christians Will Become God As He Is God?

What will become of you once you die a physical death? Will you simply die, decay, and return to the elements of the earth, with no hope of an illustrious future? Will you go either to heaven or hell as many believe, either right after death or at a resurrection? That subject is lengthy and will not be dealt with here; the main focus will be on what the future is for Elohim's elect, those chosen out of this world and cleansed of their sins through the blood of Jesus Christ, and given the awesome responsibility of being ambassadors of the Kingdom of God to be set up here on earth at the return of Jesus Christ.

This is a message of hope, of light through the darkness of this present age, and of assurance that our race is not being run in vain. Our future is awesome beyond belief, one you will not begin to fathom until you rise into the air to meet Jesus and the angels.

The Typical View of Our Future State

There are many views regarding our nature once raised from the grave. A typical evangelical Christian view is given below.

"Will humans become gods? Christians are called the children of God, and children normally grow up to be like their parent(s). Does this mean that we will become God? What will our resurrected state be like? John had something to say about these issues in I John 2:28-3:2.

"There are some interesting thoughts in this passage. First, John admits that what we will be like has not been revealed. We can speculate about these matters, but we should admit that we don't really *know* what we will be like nor what life will be like in eternity. We do know this much: we will be free of the trials and sorrows of this life (Revelation 21:3-5). John also stated that we are 'born again' in this life and that we are also called the 'children of God.' But we are still limited human beings. We can be children of God and be 'born again' without being 'Gods.' We

have to be careful how we interpret such expressions in terms of what our nature and life might be like after the resurrection.

"Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but this does not mean that we will be spirits without bodies. In the resurrection we will be 'clothed' with an imperishable and immortal nature (I Corinthians 15:52-53). We will be raised with a 'spiritual body' (verse 44), which will be a state of existence given to us by God. This tells us that we will be qualitatively different, but this difference is not something we can explain or understand in this life. There is a big difference between 'become God' and 'become like God.'

"We may become 'like' God in certain ways. God is spiritual, and we shall have spiritual bodies, so we will be 'like God' in one sense. Indeed, we are already made in the 'image and likeness' of God. We are to exhibit the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which reflects the mind and nature of God's love. We are to become 'like God' in this way as well, even in this life.

"But to believe that we shall 'become God' contradicts the Bible's teaching about the nature of God. God is one being, not many separate beings. God is eternal and uncreated. But we do not have a past eternity, and we were created by God. Therefore, we are less than God, and can never be all that God is, and we can never be God, for that word implies being eternal, being uncreated, and being all-powerful. We do not have life within ourselves, as does God. We must be given life by God. He will give us eternal life, but that life is not inherent in us, and we cannot give it to others, as God can" (P. Kroll, www.gei.org).

The above discussion includes several erroneous scriptural teachings, such as what it means to be "like" Jesus at the resurrection, the nature of spirit bodies, and the idea that there can be only one spirit being ... the "one God" concept. Rather than dwell on those fallacies, let us examine what Jesus Christ and other Biblical personalities teach concerning this

most important topic.

But first, let us read a bit of humor that makes the point. Here an Irish Catholic man is talking with a Jewish friend (www.wordofmessiah.org).

“Saul did you hear the great news? My son Patty has become a priest!”

“So what’s the big deal about that, John?” Saul asked.

“It’s a very big deal, Saul. As a priest he can one day become a Bishop!” John responded.

“So what’s the big deal about that?” Saul again asked.

“Saul, as a Bishop, Patty can one day become a Cardinal. Imagine my son the Cardinal!” John was getting excited now.

“Nu,” Saul said, “What’s the big deal about that?”

John sputtered out, “Saul, my friend, as Cardinal, Patty could be ... Oh, be still my heart ... he could become Pope!”

And Saul again asked, “So nu, what’s the big deal about that, John?”

Now impatient, John demanded, “What do you expect? For him to become God?!”

Triumphantly, Saul said, “And why not, one of our boys made it!”

The point made here is that flesh and blood cannot inherit Godship by his own means, but our heavenly Father can indeed bring it about. What does Scripture teach us about *deification*, the idea of man becoming God? We are defining *God* here as a spirit in its several uses, as *Elohim*, *El*, *Elah*, *Elo’ah*, or *YHWH* in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament as *Theos*. It can mean the Father and/or the Son (Jesus Christ), but in some cases refers to other spirit sons of God (as in Job 1:6 and 2:1) or to human leaders of note (as in I Samuel 5:7; I Kings 11:33; 18:24; etc.).

Here is what Christ, the prophets, and apostles taught.

Jesus. “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory

which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them” (John 17:20-26). Jesus prayed that He, the Father, and each of the elect would be “within” each other, showing the family relationship as well as the oneness of spirit, that can only be realized if the saints and Christ would be raised as spirits in the image of God.

David. “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness” (Psalm 17:15).

Malachi. “... she is your companion and your wife by covenant. But did He not make them one, having a remnant of the spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring” (Malachi 2:14-15). Seeking godly offspring implies a family relationship in which the children are raised up to be gods! Note Paul’s statement below.

Paul. “... for in him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring.’ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising. Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:28-30).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29). These offspring are to be part of the God family (Ephesians 3:15) that will be composed of the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ), and the raised saints at the res-

urrection. If Christ is the firstborn of many brethren, and He was raised, then the elect will follow in His footsteps to be born as spirits as well (I Peter 2:21).

“But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming” (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

“Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures” (James 1:18).

“The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” (Romans 8:16-17).

“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:17-18).

“I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord almighty ...” (II Corinthians 6:18).

“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels, but one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, but the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For

it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You’” (Hebrews 2:5-12; see also Psalm 8:4-6). Hebrews 1 points out that these angels, who are lower than sons of God of which Christ is One and the raised saints will also be a part, are servants to the saints (Hebrews 1:14). As flesh and blood the elect are “for a little while lower than the angels,” who are spirits, but once raised as spirits these elect will be, by definition, higher than the angels, because they will be sons of God, on a par with Jesus Christ! Note that Jesus Christ, in Hebrews 2:7-9 was also made lower than the angels, meaning He was flesh and blood, but He is now a spirit imbued with power as He was before leaving His divine state and being born as flesh and blood by the holy spirit and Mary.

Some deny that humans can ever become God because they had a beginning, whereas Jesus did not, since He preexisted and was born of the Father, and after death returned to His previous spirit state with the Father (John 1:14; 17:5, 18, 24, etc.). Christ and the Father are indeed eternal (Deuteronomy 33:27). Yet, we know that there will be a resurrection of the saints and they will reign with Him (II Timothy 2:11-12), will reign on the earth (Revelation 5:10) for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:6), and reign forever and ever (Revelation 22:5-6).

There is also a school of belief that humans — at least the elect — existed before they were born in spirit form, as did Jesus Christ. While this is not an issue of salvation, it is a most interesting one and helps explain the predestination concept of Romans 8 and Ephesians 1. This topic is included at the end of this paper for those who are interested.

What Some Church Fathers and Others Believed

Ignatius of Antioch. In the early second century, Ignatius wrote, “For it is not my desire to act towards you as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing God, even as also you please Him. For neither shall I ever have

such [another] opportunity of **attaining to God** ... It is good to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again to Him Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to **attain to God** “ (Ignatius, *Letter to the Romans*, Chapters 2 and 4).

Polycarp of Smyrna. “**But He who raised Him up from the dead will raise up us also** if we do His will, and walk in His commandments, and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness, covetousness, love of money, evil speaking, falsehood; ‘not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing,’ or blow for blow, or cursing for cursing, but being mindful of what the Lord ... may He bestow on you a lot and portion among His saints, and on us with you, and on all that are under heaven, who shall believe in our Lord and God Jesus Christ, and in His Father, who raised Him from the dead” (Polycarp’s Letter to the Philippians. *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 1, edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, American Edition, 1885, sections 2 and 12).

Theophilus of Antioch. “For if He had made him immortal from the beginning, He would have made him God ... so that if he should incline to the things of immortality, keeping the commandment of God, he should receive as reward from Him immortality, and **should become God** For God has given us a law and holy commandments; and every one who keeps these can be saved, and, obtaining the resurrection, can inherit incorruption (*Theophilus of Antioch. To Autolycus*, Book 2, Chapter XX VII. Translated by Marcus Dods, A.M. Excerpted from *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume 2. Edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson. American Edition, 1885. Online Edition, 2004).

Irenaeus. “For we cast blame upon Him, because **we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then at length gods**; although God has adopted this course out of His pure benevolence, that no one may impute to Him invidiousness or grudgingness. He declares, ‘I have said, **You and gods**; and you are all sons of the Highest’ For it was necessary, at first, that nature should be exhibited; then after that, that what was mortal should be conquered and swallowed up by immortality” (*Ire-*

naeus, Adversus Haereses Book IV, Chapter 38, Verse 4).

Hippolytus of Rome. “And you shall receive the kingdom of heaven, you who, while you sojourned in this life, knew the Celestial King. And you shall be a companion of the Deity, and a co-heir with Christ, no longer enslaved by lusts or passions, and never again wasted by disease. For **you have become God** For the Deity, (by condescension) does not diminish anything of the divinity of His divine perfection; **having made you even God unto His glory!** (Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, Book X, Chapter 30, 2007).

Clement of Alexandria. In the mid-late second century, Clement wrote, “And now the Word Himself clearly speaks to you, shaming your unbelief; yea, I say, the Word of God became man, that you may learn from man how **man may become God**” (Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter 1, 2007).

Origen of Alexandria. This theologian in the early third century A.D. wrote, “... from Him there began the union of the divine with the human nature, in order that the human, by communion with the divine, might **rise to be divine**, not in Jesus alone, but in all those who not only believe, but enter upon the life which Jesus taught, and which elevates to friendship with God and communion with Him every one who lives according to the precepts of Jesus (Origen, *Contra Celsus*, Book III, chapter 28, 2007).

Ambrose of Milan. In the fourth century A.D., Ambrose taught, “Then a Virgin conceived, and **the Word became flesh that flesh might become God** (Ambrose of Milan. *Concerning Virginity*, Book I, Chapter 11, 2007).

Bishop John Chrysostom. In the late fourth century he wrote, “... the **man can become God, and a child of God**. For we read, ‘I have said, You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High’” (John Chrysostom. *Homily 32 on the Acts of the Apostles*, 2007).

Martin Luther. In the 16th century Luther said, “For

the Word became flesh in order that the flesh might become Word. That is, **God becomes man in order that man might become God** (On the Word Became Flesh, Martin Luther, 1483-1546, in *Sermo Lutheri in natali Christi*, 1514, D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Weimar: Hermann Boehlau, 1883, Vol. 1, p. 28).

Pope Paul VI. “My brothers, do you understand the Grace of God our Head? Stand in admiration, rejoice; **we have become Christ**. For if He is the Head, we are the members; He and we are the complete Man ... therefore, the fullness of Christ is constituted by the Head and Members” (*Ecclesiam Suam Encyclical Letter on the Ways in which the Church Must Carry Out its Mission in the Contemporary World*, His Holiness Pope Paul VI, section 35, transcribed work by Bob Van Cleff, promulgated on August 6, 1964, 2007).

Timothy Ware. In the late 1900’s this Orthodox bishop said the following: “Such, according to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, is the final goal at which every Christian must attain; **to become god, to obtain theosis, ‘deification’ or ‘divinization’**. For Orthodoxy our salvation and redemption mean our **deification** Deification is not something reserved for a select few initiates, but is something intended for all alike. The Orthodox Church believes this is the normal goal of every Christian without exception” (T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, Penguin Books, London, 1997, p. 236).

The fact that around 400 million Orthodox Christians believe that they will become “fully God” when raised after death removes deification beyond cultic ideas. We see that a goodly portion of ancient and modern-day Christianity, even some Roman Catholics and Protestants, believe in it to some degree, but there is an easier way to prove the veracity of deification ... that man will become fully God even as Jesus Christ today is God.

The Likenesses of Jesus Christ to Us

If we can show through Scripture that we are going through the same types of experiences in life as He did when He lived in the flesh, and our inher-

itance is the same, we will have proven that indeed we will become God like He is God. Let us look at a number of points to substantiate this identity.

1. WE HAVE AN ETERNAL NATURE.

This is true for the future, but also may be true for our past, like with Jesus. This possible past eternal existence of the saints is reviewed at the end of this paper.

Jesus Christ

“And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5; see also John 16:28).

Jesus Christ is now at the right hand of God the Father in heaven, to live eternally with Him (Acts 2:33-34; 5:31; 7:55-56; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; I Peter 3:22).

“Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, ‘The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!’” (Revelation 11:15).

The Elect

“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end” (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

“And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him And they shall reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:3, 5).

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trum-

pet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible” (I Corinthians 15:51-52).

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (I Thessalonians 5:16-17).

“And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one even as We are one” (John 17:22).

2. WE ARE DESTINED TO RECEIVE RULERSHIP OVER THE NATIONS AS SPIRITS.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ has received power to rule over the nations, just as will the saints (Revelation 2:26-27).

“And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: King of Kings and Lord of Lords” (Revelation 19:14-16).

“You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth” (John 18:37).

“... Jesus Christ ... the ruler over the kings of the earth” (Revelation 1:5).

The Elect

“Arise, shine: For your [the elect’s] light has come! And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people; but the Lord will arise over you, and His glory will be seen upon you. The Gentiles

shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:1-3).

“And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations — ‘He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the potter’s vessels shall be broken to pieces’ — as I also have received from My Father ...” (Revelation 2:26-27; from Psalm 2:9).

“... For you were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we [the elect] shall reign on the earth” (Revelation 5:9-10).

3. WE ARE TO INHERIT ALL THINGS.

Jesus Christ

“‘The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine,’ says the Lord of hosts” (Haggai 2:8).

“All things were made through Him [Christ], and without Him nothing was made that was made” (John 1:3).

“He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him” (John 1:10).

“Of old You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands” (Psalm 102:25).

“I have made the earth, and created man on it. It was I — My hands that stretched out the heavens, and all their host I have commanded” (Isaiah 45:12).

“... which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:9).

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him

and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:15-17).

“... Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands...” (John 13:3).

“God, who in at sundry times and in diverse manners spoke in time past unto to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds ...” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

The Elect

“He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son” (Revelation 21:7).

“Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (Matthew 5,3, 5).

“But one in a certain place testified, saying, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him, or the son of man, that You visit him? You made him a little lower than the angels; You crowned him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that He put all things in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him” (Hebrews 1:6-8).

4. WE RECEIVE GOD’S SPIRIT BY BAPTISM AND THE LAYING ON OF HANDS.

Jesus Christ

“Then Jesus, when He had been baptized, came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him” (Matthew 3:16; see also Mark 1:10 and Luke 3:21-22).

Jesus was baptized along with a number of other

people; see Luke 3:21. Like the elect, God’s holy spirit was given at baptism, for it is pictured descending as a dove, a dramatic demonstration of the Father’s spirit-impregnating power. Such signs seldom accompany the baptism of the saints, but God’s spirit is granted nonetheless. Jesus Christ’s sinless life resulted from His strength of mind, body, and human spirit, in touch with His Father, bequeathed through direct birth from the Father, without the inherited faults of sinful preceding generations of fathers and mothers.

The Elect

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

“And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit’. Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized” (Acts 9:17-18).

“Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized” (Acts 18:8).

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:5-6-).

“Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery” (I Timothy 4:14).

5. WE ARE SPIRITUAL BROTHERS, WITH THE SAME FATHER, FAMILY, AND POTENTIAL.

Jesus Christ

“Then one said to Him, ‘Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.’ But He answered and said to the one who told Him, ‘Who is My mother and who are My brothers?’ And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, ‘Here are My mother and My brothers!’” (Matthew 12:47-49).

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren ...” (Romans 8:29).

“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16:28).

“... Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead ...” (Revelation 1:5).

As an Elder Brother whose mission it was to live a sinless life, and pay the penalty for men’s sins as the pioneer or forerunner of the saints’ salvation, Jesus Christ is the mediator between the elect and the Father (I Timothy 2:5), a function the elect could never perform at this time.

The Elect

“... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:21).

See also “An Understanding of Oneness: the Father in Christ and the Brethren, Christ in the Father and the Brethren, and the Brethren in the Father and Christ” in *Understanding God’s Government*, Xulon Press, 2018, by this author.

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence” (Colossians 1:18).

“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of me, for which reason He is not

ashamed to call them brethren ... And again, ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me’” [Isaiah 8:18]” (Hebrews 2:11, 13).

Recall the discussion earlier where it is contended that it is very likely that, as physical sons grow in stature and maturity to become physical fathers themselves, so will spiritual sons such as Jesus Christ and the saints grow in the spirit realm to become spiritual Fathers someday. The analogies between the physical and spiritual realms are unmistakable.

6. WE ARE SENT TO EARTH BY THE FATHER.

Jesus Christ

“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him ...” (John 6:44).

“I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father” (John 16:28).

“... Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hand, and that He had come from God and was going to God ...” (John 13:3).

[Note the discussion under “1. Their Eternal Nature”.]

The Elect

“It is written in the prophets, ‘and they shall all be taught by God’. Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me” (John 6:45; from Isaiah 54:13).

“And again: ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me’. Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same ...” (Hebrews 2:13-14).

[Note the discussion under “1. Their Eternal Nature”.]

7. WE WILL REIGN WITH THE FATHER ON HIS THRONE.

Jesus Christ

“But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple” (Revelation 21:22).

“... We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens ...” (Hebrews 8:1).

The Elect

“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne” (Revelation 3:21).

8. WE WILL BE WORSHIPED [ONLY GODS CAN BE WORSHIPED].

Jesus Christ

“For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Romans 14:11).

“That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth ...” (Philippians 2:10).

“And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘All hail.’ And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him” (Matthew 28:9).

“And Jesus said unto him, ‘You have both seen him, and it is He that talks with you.’ And he said, ‘Lord, I believe.’ And he worshiped Him” (John 9:37-38).

The Elect

“Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before your [the saints’] feet, and to know that I have loved

you” (Revelation 3:9).

“And kings shall be your nursing fathers, and their queens your nursing mothers: they shall bow down to you with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of your feet; and they shall know that I am the Lord ...” (Isaiah 49:23).

“The sons also of them that afflicted you shall come bending unto you: and all they that despised you shall bow themselves down at the soles of your feet ...” (Isaiah 60:14).

9. WE PRAY DIRECTLY TO THE FATHER.

Jesus Christ

“Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: ‘Father, the hour has come’” (John 17:1).

“He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, ‘O my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will but as You will’” (Matthew 26:39).

The Elect

“In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name” (Matthew 6:9).

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:6).

10. THE FATHER SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO US.

Jesus Christ

“And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, ‘This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:17).

“While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out

of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!'" (Matthew 17:5).

The Elect

God the Father speaks to the elect through the Word, the Scriptures.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness ..." (II Timothy 3:16).

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God ..." (Ephesians 6:17).

11. WE ENDURE TRIALS, SUFFER, AND OVERCOME AS LIVING SACRIFICES.

Jesus Christ

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

"To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne" (Revelation 4:21).

"If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish [typifying Jesus Christ]: he shall offer it of his own voluntary will at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord" (Leviticus 1:3, and similar references elsewhere).

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; he was despised, and we esteemed Him not. Surely He has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:3-5; see also I Peter 2:21-24).

"... and when he (Pilate) had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified ... And they [the soldiers] stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe. And when they had plaited a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head And they crucified Him ..." (Matthew 27:26, 28-29, 35).

The Elect

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:17-18).

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 1:6-7).

"... and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17-18).

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son" (Revelation 21:7).

"I beseech you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

12. WE ARE MINISTERED TO BY ANGELS.

Jesus Christ

“Then the devil left Him, and behold, angels came and ministered to Him” (Matthew 3:11).

“‘Father, if it is Your will, remove this cup from Me; nevertheless not My will, but yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him” (Luke 22:42-43).

The Elect

“But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13-14).

“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2).

13. WE FORGIVE THE SINS OF OTHERS.

Jesus Christ

“... and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; ‘Son, be of good cheer; your sins be forgiven you.’ And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, ‘This man blasphemes’. ‘Wherefore think you evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say, “Your sins be forgiven thee”; or to say, “Arise, and walk?” But that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up your bed, and go unto your house”’ (Matthew 9:2-6; also in Mark 2:3-12 and Luke 5:18-26).

“Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

“Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9).

“I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name’s sake” (I John 2:12).

“But if her father disallow her in the day that he hears; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she has bound her soul, shall stand: and the Lord shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her ...” (Numbers 30:5).

“For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon You” (Psalm 86:5).

The Elect

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matthew 6:12, 14-15).

“So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their trespasses” (Matthew 18:35).

“And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses” (Mark 11:25-26).

“... forgive, and you shall be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

“Take heed to yourselves: If your brother trespass against you, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turns again to you, saying, I repent; you shall forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

“So that contrariwise you ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow” (II Corinthians 2:7).

“To whom you forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ” (II Corinthians 2:10).

14. CHRIST AND THE ELECT ARE EQUIVALENT AT THE RESURRECTION.

Jesus Christ made no distinction between Himself and Mary — and all of His ecclesia — at His resurrection. He stated, “I ascend unto My Father and your Father; and to My God, and your God” (John 20:17). A special point was made to emphasize that He considered Himself no greater than one of the brethren in terms of the true Parent for each of us. He considered Himself, in fact, a part of the brethren by this declaration. Besides, He acknowledged that the *true* Parent of each of us is the Father, and the only wellspring of hope we have — just as He had — is the resurrection from the dead to eternal life.

The Greek words used in John 20:17 for Father and God are as follows:

Father (Strong 3962) = *pater*, a father (lit. or fig., near or more remote).

God (Strong 2316) = *theos*, a deity, esp. the supreme Divinity, fig. a magistrate.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God [the Father] bring with Him” (I Thessalonians 4:14).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him just as He is” (I John 3:2).

“... who [Christ] shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Philippians 3:21).

“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18).

“For whom He did foreknow He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Romans 8:29).

“And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we

shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (I Corinthians 15:49).

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory” (Colossians 3:4).

“... whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (II Peter 1:4).

15. THE LAW IS WRITTEN IN OUR HEARTS, WE DO THE FATHER’S WILL, AND WE HAVE HIS MIND.

Jesus Christ

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, for whatever things He does, these also do the Son likewise’” (John 5:19).

“That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You have sent Me” (John 17:21).

“The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; He will magnify the law, and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21).

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Matthew 5:17-18).

“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, says the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people” (Jeremiah 31:33).

The commandments and fruits of the Spirit codify for God’s way of love to the Father and love to one’s

neighbor (Exodus 20:2-17; Galatians 5:22-23; Matthew 22:3;6-40).

The Elect

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done in earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10).

“For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16).

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

See the reference to Jeremiah 31:33 in the adjoining column (also quoted in Hebrews 8:10).

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy” (Acts 2:17-18).

“But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Romans 8:24; righteousness is defined as keeping the commandments in Psalm 119:172).

16. WE ARE GIVEN A NAME THAT NO ONE ELSE KNOWS.

Jesus Christ

“His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written that no man knew, but He Himself” (Revelation 19:12).

The Elect

“He that has an ear let him hear the spirit says unto the churches: to him that overcomes will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone,

and in that stone a new name written, which no man knows saving he that receives it” (Revelation 2:17).

17. WE ARE TO BE EXAMPLES OF GODLY LIVING TO THE WORLD.

Jesus Christ

“In the mean while his disciples prayed Him, saying, ‘Master, eat’” (John 4:31).

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do: for what things soever He does, these also does the Son likewise’” (John 5:19).

“I can of Mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which has sent Me” (John 5:30).

“I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night comes when no man can work” (John 9:4).

“For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father which sent Me, he gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49).

“Believe you not that I am in the Father; and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwells in Me: or else believe Me for the very works’ sake” (John 14:10).

The Elect

“For even herunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: who did not sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judges righteously ...” (I Peter 2:21-23).

“He that says he abides in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked” (I John 2:6).

Corinthians 2:9).

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever” (I John 2:15-17).

“Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).

“For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15).

“He that speaks of himself seeks his own glory: but he that seeks His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:18).

18. THERE IS HOPE OF GREAT GLORY IN THE SPIRIT REALM AFTER PHYSICAL DEATH

Jesus Christ

“... looking unto Jesus the Beginner and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the stake, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).

joy (Strong 5479) = *chara*, “cheerfulness, i.e. calm delight”.

The Elect

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).

“But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him” (I

19. WE HAVE BEEN SENT INTO THE WORLD.

Jesus Christ and The Elect

“As You have sent Me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world” (John 17:18).

20. WE ARE NOT OF THE WORLD

Jesus Christ and The Elect

“I have given them Your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.... They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14, 16).

21. WE ARE TEMPTED WITH EVIL

Jesus Christ

“For we have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

The Elect

“Blessed is the man that endures temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love Him.... but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed” (James 1:12, 14).

22. WE WERE ORDAINED BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD TO BE SONS OF GOD

Jesus Christ

“He [Jesus Christ] indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you” (I Peter 1:20).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was

with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:1-2, 14).

The Elect

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved” (Ephesians 1:3-6).

“For whom He foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined these He also called; whom He called these He also justified; and whom He justified these He also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

“Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed [tasso = ‘to place in order, appoint’] to eternal life believed” (Acts 13:48).

23. WE WERE MADE A LITTLE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS

Jesus Christ

“But we see Jesus, who was made a little [while] lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone” (Hebrews 2:9).

The Elect

“When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you visit him? For you have made him a little [while] lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor. You have

made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; you have put all things under his feet ...” (Psalm 8:3-6).

“For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him? You have made him a little [while] lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.” (Hebrews 2:5-8).

Here we see that both Jesus and the elect have been made lower than the spirit plane for “a little while,” meaning that they are on equal terms in this sense, both flesh and blood which can die. Jesus Christ came from the spirit realm, where he preexisted, and lived as a human being in the image of Elohim just as the physical descendants of Adam have been doing for about 6,000 years. Jesus has been raised from the dead, the “firstborn of many brethren” (Romans 8:29), and the elect will be raised at the resurrection and likewise be given eternal life (I Thessalonians 4:16-17). Please refer to point 1 to review the fact that humans, made in Elohim’s image, also preexisted in the heavenly realm as did Jesus Christ.

There are many more identities of Jesus Christ with the elect which one could explore. Note some comprehensive scriptures that clearly denote **the same pathway which Jesus Christ and the saints walk.**

“Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:17-18).

“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked” (I John 2:6).

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. and the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have love Me” (John 17:20-23).

Of special interest is II Corinthians 3:18:

“But all of us who are Christians have no veils on our faces, but reflect like mirrors the glory of the Lord. We are transfigured in ever-increasing splendor into his own image, and the transformation comes from the Lord who is the spirit” (Phillips translation).

What a magnificent rendition of the truth that **we, as called and chosen disciples of Jesus Christ, over time become more and more like our Savior ... transformed into His very image!** We reflect the Eternal’s glory like mirrors! This is referring in part to our becoming like Him in character as we put down the pulls of the flesh and live by His spirit (Galatians 5:22-24), but the ultimate conclusion of the matter is to become very God in spirit conformation at the resurrection, even as we now are made in His image while fleshly beings (Genesis 1:26-27; I Corinthians 15:42-54; I John 3:2: “... when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ...”, and when you have seen Christ [who looked like us] you know what the Father looks like in the spirit realm: see John 14:9.

The “walk” that Jesus Christ and the saints experience is the same, differing only in terms of specifics relevant to the age in which one lives. We follow Christ’s example, walking in His footsteps (I John 2:26; I Peter 2:21). Just as Jesus would do only the will of the Father (Luke 1:49; John 5:19), so the brethren are to do the exclusive will of the Father (Matthew 6:10; Mark 3:35). The only difference between Jesus and us is that He was directly born of the Father and sinless, while we are indirectly born of the Father — through Adam — and have sinned ... though we are now washed clean by His perfect sac-

rifice!

Not only that, but the saints have God’s spirit to know **all** things, just like Jesus Christ has all knowledge because of His intimate contact with the Father.

“But as it is written, ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for them that love Him.’ But God has revealed them unto us by His spirit: for the spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knows no man, but the spirit of God” (I Corinthians 2:9-11).

In Conclusion ...

We have seen in this paper that those whom the Eternal has called and chosen to be His sons will indeed become God like Jesus Christ. We are all sons of our heavenly Father, the Ancient of Days, the one who has given us life from the foundation of the world!

The humility of our great Creator is dumbfounding, the One who made the world, who gave us His Son to pay the price for our sins, and who now abides within us and is the express image of the Father, has this nature:

“Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ...” (Philippians 2:1-5).

Think of that! The Creator of the universe and of you and me reveals His mind to be one that does not place Himself above any of us! What incredible, incomprehensible love, the love we should be striving for daily, looking after the interests of others to boost them up where we can, even as the risen Christ cares so deeply for us that he does not place themselves above us. That is the essence of life as it ought to be, to live in unbelievable abundance and joy (John

10:10)!

This does not mean that Christ will cease being our Elder Brother, for He will always hold the preeminence in our hearts and minds (Colossians 1:18), for without His sacrifice we would be dead, and He has lived for eternity past, as far as we know. This grants Him infinite knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, that He is willing to share with us today, and will for all eternity.

Afternotes

The Peexistence of the Elect As Brothers of Jesus Christ [a belief held by some, but not a matter of salvation]

The preexistence of Jesus Christ as one of Elohim, His life on earth as a human being, and His eternal life in heaven, are a picture of each one of the elect of the Father. We, the elect, were foreknown to be Sons of God. How? Because we beforetime lived in heaven (the spirit realm) with Jesus Christ and the Sons of God.

We are born, live, suffer, and die, and finally will be raised from the dead as was Christ. Recall that Jesus Christ “... *came unto His own* ...” (Strong 2398 = *idios*, “one’s own, by implication private or separate”), and although these predestined people of Israel for the most part did not recognize Immanuel when He came, yet “... *as many as received Him, to them He gave power [the right or privilege] to become the Sons of God*” (John 1:11-12). The others of Israel who rejected Him the first time will surely be given the opportunity to accept Him as Messiah once the veil of disbelief is lifted from their understanding. They will be a part of the second resurrection, for God has declared that all of Israel shall be saved (Romans 11:26; Jeremiah 3:18).

There are differences between Christ and the elect, of course, in that the preexisting Spirit from which each one is derived is unique. Jesus as Yahweh of the Old Testament (see I Corinthians 10:4) is obviously a powerful, mature being; such is not be the case for the elect, but even so God has forgiven

and paid the price for such deficiencies, such that even the weak are to be granted eternal, scintillatingly rewarding and stupendous positions in the Kingdom after the resurrection.

*“In My Father’s house [the heavenly Zion} are many mansions [Greek *mone*, or residences and responsibilities]; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you”* (John 14:2).

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work” [Greek *ergon*, or the effort or occupation he will enjoy in the Kingdom] (Revelation 22:12).

Those positions are already allotted for the elect; see I Corinthians 12:18:

“But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.”

God’s called-out elect so vigorously are implored to develop the character and qualities of Jesus Christ, to *in every way* become like Him. Man’s ultimate destiny is to become *like Jesus Christ*, to become *very God*, in the Father’s image! Yet, only the firstfruits — known as the “elect” — will be raised in the first resurrection, with the rest raised later:

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming [the first resurrection]. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father [at the second, general resurrection], when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power” (I Corinthians 15:22-24).

The spirit of God which dwells within His people allows the Father to raise the individual to eternal spirit life (Romans 8:11). The life the saints now live is in Christ’s footsteps (I John 2:6), the flesh now dead and their lives “... *hidden with Christ in God*” (Colossians 3:3), enduring the sufferings He endured (I Peter 2:21), and gaining the character of God through trials (Galatians 5:23-23; James 1:2-5). It is a life of faith towards the Elder Brother of a vast brotherhood, to walk after Him as one crucified, liv-

ing by faith and not by sight (Romans 12:1; Galatians 2:20; II Corinthians 5:7). Things regarding God's desire for us that seem impossible will be possible ... but not only possible, reality indeed! This will be true for a goodly portion of all people who have ever lived:

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

Even Judas Iscariot will likely be among those resurrected and brought to the timeless heavenly Zion, for he repented of his evil deed of betraying Christ (Matthew 27:3), although Jesus did say that it would have been better that he had never been born (Matthew 26:24), and that the son of perdition (Judas) was lost (John 17:12). This scripture may mean, however, that Judas was lost as a disciple amongst the twelve, not lost from eventual Sonship. The beast and false prophet, however, are condemned to die an eternal death along with Satan and the demons (Revelation 19:10; 20:10).

To realize that one's eternal future holds joys, fulfillment, position, glory, and accomplishment no less vivid than those of Jesus Christ is a most astounding realization. Since the increase of God's government is endless (Isaiah 9:7), it is highly likely that planets in far flung galaxies will become inhabited by God's saints and new creations. This is the type of future that our Father has promised for each of His creatures,

"... that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they may also be one in Us ... And the glory which You gave Me I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one ..." (John 17:21-22).

The family model about which humankind — and most of the animal and plant world — revolve is placed here for no small reason. The family pictures the very progression of man from conception, to gestation, to birth, to growth to adulthood — progressing from being a son (or daughter) to becoming a father or mother. This progression continues through generations, increasing the number of those who can be raised as Sons of God, increasing the government of

God endlessly ... or at least as long as reproduction and families continue. Recall that God said through Paul that *"The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse"* (Romans 1:20).

God says that what He has created in the physical realm shows clearly the pattern of the unseen spiritual realm. Fathers and mothers in the flesh produce sons. These sons become fathers. On and on continues the progression of God's increase and government, revealing His eternal power and heavenly family organizational structure — His Godhead — so evident to the discerning eye that Paul states the pattern is *clearly* seen; scoffers against God and His design of families are *without excuse*. One merely has to look at the creation and to see the truths of Him.

Have you ever wondered why mountains seem so majestic and beautiful to you? Could it be that a deep-seated memory is being stirred from your previous existence within the spirit realm, a realm of perfection and beauty, of the Heavenly Zion stretching upwards in regal majesty, clothed with gems which are beautiful and glistening beyond comprehension? The spirit which comprises the saints must indeed possess that memory of its heavenly tenure, a realm that it longs to recover in its fullness, an existence that is promised to those in whom that spirit dwells. Thus, the indefatigable zest of God's called-out ones to withstand suffering and abuse from Satan's realm here on the earth, even martyrdom by being sawn in two, burned alive, or torn limb from limb on the rack, can be understood. Achieving life eternal within heaven's indescribable beauty is worth every bit of suffering this world and Satan can dole out..

Let us withstand earth's pain and suffering. Let us be in the realm of heaven soon!

See John 16:28: "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father." For an Old Testament scripture, see Psalm 8:5: "For thou hast made him [man] a little [while] lower than the angels [*Elohim* = gods; Strong 430], and hast crowned him with glory and honor."

Since God, in Ecclesiastes 12:7, indicated that physical man's spirit reality came from God — who fabricated the physical being around a spirit template — and man at death goes back to God in heaven ("... and the spirit shall return unto God, or *Elohim* = gods; Strong 430], then one can see that Psalm 8:5 is referring to the same thing. There is no reason that "angels" should have been the translated word for *Elohim* in this verse when in about 2,590 other places it is translated "gods". Even though Paul used the word "angels" when he quoted this Scripture in Hebrews 2:7, there is no linguistic reason that *Elohim* should mean anything but "gods" in Psalms. Thus, this scripture in Psalms is relating the same message as for Jesus Christ in John 16:28, and for the brethren and Christ in Hebrews 2:14. For "a little while" the *Elohim* Beings have been made flesh and blood, but they will soon return to the spirit realm following God's calling, choosing, and resurrection. (This is not saying spirits will not be able to manifest themselves materially in the coming age.)

— PAST ETERNAL EXISTENCE —

Jesus Christ

He was with the Father (a Spirit), in heaven before becoming flesh and blood.

"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 nothing was made that was made And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ..." (John 1:1-3, 14).

"No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven" (John 3:13).

Heaven (Strong 3772) = *ouranos*, the sky (elevated in height); by extension, heaven (as the abode of God).

No man having ascended to heaven refers not having entered the heavenly Zion, which is elevated in great height above the earth's surface in the spirit realm (Revelation 21:2, 10-21), for heaven is exten-

sive and in the same space as the earth and its surface. On the surface of the earth the dead, as spirit, rest and reside until the resurrection (see Matthew 24:31; I Corinthians 15:50-52).

The Son of Man [Jesus] being "in heaven" refers to His direct access to the Father in heaven, which exists in the same space as the physical realm. He, like us, is (was) thus in both realms at once — they occupy the same time and space, but have different "frequencies", for lack of a better term — but He had such close links to the spirit world that He actually lived in both, and could see into the spirit and commune with it.

"He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me [the Father in heaven, where Christ was also] For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command ..." (John 12:44, 49).

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44).

The Elect

The elect were with the Father in heaven before becoming flesh and blood.*

"Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12:7). [Thus, the spirit, the "real person" was once with God who is in heaven.]

"And again: 'Here am I [Yahweh = Jesus Christ] and the children [the elect] whom God [the Father] has given Me [Jesus Christ; quoted from Isaiah 8:18]. Inasmuch then as the children [the elect] have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself [Jesus Christ] likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil ..." (Hebrews 2:13-14.)

Just as Jesus Christ became flesh and blood, but before was a spirit, so the elect were first eternal spirit with God before they became flesh and blood. The analogy between Christ's and the elect's state is unmistakable. Adam, from whom all of mankind has

descended (Acts 17:26), came directly as a “spirit germ” or template from God’s express image (Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7), a Son of God (Luke 3:38). The elect, physically speaking, have come from Adam through generations of procreation, carrying his genes ... which are exact copies of God’s spiritual form (now converted to physical).

If A = God’s spirit germ [DNA] that became Adam’s physical being, shaped by DNA, and B = Adam, then A = B; each is comprised of the same DNA. All people have descended from Adam’s DNA, and out of these descendants have come the elect. If the elect are C, then B = C. If A = B and B = C, then A = C; the elect, descendants of Adam, are equal to God in genetic makeup, taking on His image of the original spiritual genetic code made physical.

Thus, if man’s DNA is equivalent to God’s DNA, both have had eternal spirit existence. Today’s human beings made in God’s image — as for Adam — is verified in James 3:9 “With it [the tongue] we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse man, who have been made in the similitude of God”.

[For additional information on the unity of God’s and man’s genetics, see “An Understanding of Oneness: The Father in Christ and the Brethren, Christ in the Father and the Brethren, and the Brethren in the Father and Christ, a Spiritual Application of God’s Genetic Code,” in *Understanding God’s Government*, Xulon Press, 2018.]

Thus, God would know beforehand — before converting the spirits of Elohim into flesh and blood — those who were predestined to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ, walking in His footsteps and inheriting salvation. To predestine them He had to know them beforehand, and indeed He did, in the heavenly spirit world. This explains why He could call them “brethren”, and how he “knew” them, for they were of His same spiritual genetic family, Sons of God [Elohim] in heaven before becoming flesh. Once in receipt of God’s spirit they were in totality His Sons, prepared to be once again perfected spirit Sons of God as Jesus Christ was.

“For whom He foreknew [before being made flesh and blood, as spirits in the spirit world], He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also

called; whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified” (Romans 8:29-30).

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He [the Father] chose us in Him [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will ... that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth — in Him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him ...” (Ephesians 1:3-5, 10-11).

Jesus Christ therefore, as relatives [“brethren”] of these predestined adopted Sons, knew them in the spirit realm before they became flesh and blood, as He said:

“And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (John 10:4).

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd” (John 10:14, 16).

“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me” (John 10:27).

“You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Therefore by their fruits you shall know them” (Matthew 7: 16, 20).

“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His’ ...” (II Timothy 2:19).

David acknowledged his memory of this preexistence of the “real David” — his spirit — in the

heavenly realm when he wrote Psalm 84:1-4:

“How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yea, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the sparrow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young — even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You.”

Whether David ever viewed heaven before he wrote this Psalm is a question that may never be answered in this age. In any case, it is clear from this song that the innermost perceptions of David understood that heaven is indeed beautiful and wonderful beyond fleshly comprehension ... a perception that is impossible unless one's “real person” — the spirit that preexisted in the heavenly realm — revealed that truth. One's spirit cannot long and faint for the dwelling of the Eternal unless it has a reasonably clear perception of its reality. That realization can come only from that spirit having been there in heaven to perceive it in its fullness and glory.

Jesus Christ made plain that those people who were of Satan's spiritual lineage before becoming flesh and blood were not known to Him. They were not close to him, were of a lawless lineage, and did not carry the mark of the Eternal God. These individuals Christ claimed He never knew:

“But He answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you’ ” [the other virgins who failed to bring enough oil] (Matthew 25:12).

“But you [the antagonistic Jews] do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you” (John 10:26).

“Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels ... ’” (Matthew 25:41).

The demons knew Jesus Christ, for they had lived in the heavenly realm before being cast down to earth (Revelation 12:4, 9), where they occupied the bodies and minds of those individuals who gave

over their own will to another entity (Matthew 12:43-45):

“Then he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him” (Mark 1:34).

Thus, both the righteous and the evil preexisting spirits are shown to have known Jesus Christ, for all were in the heavenly realm sometime before.

A question may arise as to why God first made flesh and blood human beings — and angels in the flesh during an aeon before them — if the Elohim beings never die. The key is that only flesh and blood can reproduce and not spirit with spirit (spirits are *both* male and female together), and if God's plan is to populate other worlds and increase His government continually (Isaiah 9:6), then the beings to populate that enlarged government must increase as well.

God's elect and Jesus Christ were, are, and will be Sons of God ... and since God is eternal spirit, so His Sons are eternal and spirit. Recall that the reality of man is spirit, and with God's Spirit in man he has eternal spirit.

As a closely related aside, consider that it is very likely that as Spiritual sons such as Jesus Christ and the saints grow in the Spirit realm, they will become Spiritual Fathers some day. The analogy in the world in which we live is clear: physical sons grow in stature and maturity to become physical fathers themselves. The analogies between the physical and Spiritual realm are unmistakable, placed in the material world for the saints to view as a true depiction of Spiritual realities, like the depiction of heavenly realities within the Tabernacle in the Wilderness (Hebrews 8:1-6). The created world, of which we are a part, is also a depiction of heavenly realities. The reality of Jesus Christ to become a Father is shown in Isaiah 9:6:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Here Jesus Christ is prophesied to be called “The

everlasting Father”! Note also Matthew 5:45, which states, “... for He [the Father] makes *His sun* to rise on the evil and on the good” This statement implies that the sun of this solar system is indeed the Father’s, but does this mean that other solar systems in the universe belong to others of equivalent character to our Father? Without in any way limiting the power and authority of our heavenly Father (for we owe our lives to Him), I believe this to be the case.

Note also Isaiah 14:12-14, where Lucifer tries to ascend above the stars (Spirits) of God [Hebrew *el j*(Strong 410), any deity]. He wanted to “... be like the most High” in a forcible way, but failed to recognize that God’s government operates by love and service, not by “lording it over” others (Matthew 20:25-28). To “... be like the most High” indicates that Lucifer knew one could become like the Father, but God’s way is to call and choose those who may eventually be as Him, guide and nurture them to grow in the Spirit, resurrect them to Spirit, and then

eventually give them jurisdiction and power to rule as the Father now rules the solar system. He also implies giving redeemed mankind — as for Jesus Christ — the ability to create an ecosphere, animals, birds, fish, people, and other creatures upon planets elsewhere to multiply the realm of the righteous ... for how else could there be endless increase of His government and peace (Isaiah 9:7)?

Notice especially Isaiah 53, which prophecies of Jesus Christ but at the same time speaks directly and intensively to each of the saints. Verse 1 says, “*Who* has believed our report?” The *saints* have believed God’s report: “... blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). “... to whom is the arm of the Lorn revealed?” It is revealed not just to Jesus, but to each one of His people: “... but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you” (John 15:15).

