

What It Means To Be... EQUAL with GOD

Can human beings literally become equal with God? What exactly would that mean? Are these questions "childishly absurd"? Or even blasphemous? Many people think so. But not God. And it's His Plan and His universe—He should know!

by Robert L. Kuhn

THE BIBLE states that the purpose of human life — the ultimate goal for all human beings — is to eventually be born into the God Family, to eventually become equal with the Creator of the universe!

Equal with God!

Shocking? Undoubtedly. But this remarkable fact is surprisingly easy to prove. There is no difficult "exegesis" (scriptural analysis) involved. Symbolic logic is unnecessary. Complex philosophical arguments are not needed. And Hebrew can even be "Greek" to you — and you can still understand this simple, beautiful truth.

In one sense, all that is required is a four-step process:

1) The Creator of the universe is the One who became Jesus Christ (John 1:3, 10; Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 3:9; Hebrews 1:2).

2) Jesus Christ is equal with God (John 5:18; Philippians 2:6).

3) We are joint-heirs with Christ, and as a sure result, we will all be glorified together with Him (Romans 8:17).

4) Whatever glory God the Father had given Christ — the position of Creator — Christ will eventually give to us (John 17:11 and 22). In other words, every converted individual will eventually enjoy the same relationship to Christ — God the Creator — as Christ presently enjoys with God the Father.

In another sense, all that is required is a "childishly simple," word-by-word reading — without interpretation — of Genesis 1:26. Here God succinctly gives the purpose of human life: Whereas animals reproduce after the animal kind, man reproduces after the God kind! Or, more properly phrased, human beings are the instruments through which *God is reproducing Himself*.

Which means that you were born to literally become a *Son* in the God Family-Kingdom. Now that is not a dark saying. It is not the esoteric wisdom of a far country. And it is surely not cloaked in mystery. God's Plan is straightforward. It is explained and expounded in dozens of scriptures.

What the World Offers

You can scrutinously investigate all of the myriad denominations, synods, sects, cults, orders and offshoots that this world has to offer — and never find even a remote allusion to the fact that God is a Family, that God is reproducing Himself, and that man was created to literally become God.

Now there is certainly no dearth of *ideas* floating around. Any way you want it, you can find it — some religion is sure to feature it. This world's religious system offers *every* conceivable possibility for man's ultimate destiny: everything from angelic beings to eternally physical beings, everything from dis-

embodied souls to transmigrated bodies — *everything but the truth*.

Looking for a purpose in life? Check your newspapers, magazines, yellow pages, grocery store bulletin boards, college campuses. Find yourself a religion that suits you. You've got thousands to choose from. Surely at least *one* church or organization has been specifically tailored to your tastes. Get yourself an austere one — or one with all the weird variations, special nuances and distinctive frills that the human mind can concoct thrown in as part of the "package deal." Better yet, make up your own "package deal" — invent your own religion.

You can believe anything you want. Anything but the truth. Anything but the incredibly awesome fact that every human being was designed to grow up to join the God Family.

We repeat: No religion of this world even comes close to hinting that man's purpose in life is to be born *as a Son* into the Family of Almighty God.

Now that all by itself should seem rather odd. In all the wide spectrum of religious beliefs it would seem that at least *one* would have stumbled upon the obvious, literal word-by-word meaning of the Bible. But none has. Perhaps we will cover that very interesting point in a later issue of TOMORROW'S WORLD!

Now, it is true that a few religious fringers might possibly agree that "man is to become God." *But their*

"God" is not God. They just use this respectable three-letter term as a convenient label to attach to some nebulous, self-satisfying platitude like "Cosmic Consciousness" or to some amorphous, self-glorifying quality like "Infinite Intelligence." And the goal of human life, these self-assured mystics maintain, is to become "At One with the Cosmic Consciousness" and to be "merged into the Infinite Intelligence."

This watered-down excuse for a purpose in life is the "calling-card-come-on" of many "mental science" religions — and also figures prominently in some non-Western religions. All of these philosophies have one point in common: They preach the utter dissolution of the individual human personality. You are to be diffused into the "Cosmic Consciousness," absorbed by the "Infinite Intelligence" and swallowed up by "Universal Love" — much like a drop of yellow paint which becomes completely diffused after being dropped into the ocean, or like a decaying human body which becomes totally absorbed into the surrounding soil after many years in its grave, or perhaps like those hapless human minds which were swallowed up by the invading monster brains which terrified us in the science-fiction movies of the 1950's.

The Bible absolutely repudiates all such attempts to destroy the dignity and the majesty of each distinctive human mind. Human beings will always retain their individuality — we will become individual Personalities in the Father's God Family.

What God Offers

It cannot be repeated too often:

We were born for the express purpose of literally becoming equal with the Creator of the universe — members in the same eternally ruling God Family-Kingdom.

But what will we be like?

Like God!

Exactly!

Exactly like God!

We will *do* what God does. We will *feel, act, enjoy* and *experience* at precisely the same presently incomprehensible level of awareness at which God feels, acts, enjoys and experiences.

And we will not lose our unique awarenesses and our individual personalities. We will not be diffused into the "Cosmic Consciousness," we will not be absorbed by the "Infinite Intelligence," and we will not be swallowed up by "Universal Love."

As a matter of fact, just the opposite is true: The members of God's Family in tomorrow's world will be more distinct from one another than members of the human family are distinct from one another in today's world. All will have their own individually specific memories, abilities, personality traits, jobs, responsibilities, preferences and ideas. But there won't be any competition or conflict. Because the old culprit — self-centered human nature — will have been long since eliminated.

Exactly Like God? How's That Possible?

When mankind is promised to be made "equal with God," that of course means that individual human beings will eventually become *qualitatively equal* with God — and obviously does *not* mean that individual human beings will eventually become *quantitatively equal* with either God the Father or Jesus Christ. Being "equal with God" only means that we will be in the same God Family as the Father and Christ are in — and has nothing to do with an equality of power, authority, intelligence, etc., *within* the Family.

In other words, those people who will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye" (I Corinthians 15:52) will share the same exact *qualities* of life which today are only possessed by God the Father and Jesus Christ.

For example, one of God's *qualities* is that He has inherent life — He generates *eternal life intrinsically within Himself*. Because *God is life*. "For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself" (John 5:26). Consequently, since the two original Beings in the God Family created all mankind to grow to become *qualitatively* like themselves, when we individual human beings are changed into new, individual *God-Beings*, we, too, will generate eternal life *intrinsically* within ourselves (John

7:38; 4:14; 3:16, 36; 6:47; 10:28; 17:2, etc.)

But *quantitatively*, man will never equal God the Creator, just as surely as God the Creator (Jesus Christ) will Himself never quantitatively equal God the Father (John 14:28).

These two original Beings in the God Family will always remain in overall command. Their absolute authority will never be questioned — although they will delight in sharing progressively more of their responsibilities with their offspring as the God Family continues to expand throughout space and time.

What Being God Will Really Be Like

We have seen that God is reproducing Himself. And this is what human life is all about.

Every individual person has been created to grow toward Sonship (Romans 8:14-15) — to become a literal Son of God — a Son who is in every way *qualitatively equal* to his Father, yet a Son who is always in thankful and gracious submission to his Creator Father.

This overall concept is not difficult to grasp.

But it is crucial — because *that's what human life is ALL about*.

Perhaps a practical analogy will help us to more fully comprehend the wonders of God's magnificent purpose — and the majesty of our individual calling.

Picture the model of a large family corporation. The Rothschilds of Europe are perhaps the best example. The "Patriarch" father founded the company "from nothing" many years ago. He labored long by himself to build the business. When he begot sons, he desired to prepare them for the time when they could come into his organization. He nurtured them and he trained them. And so, after receiving all the proper education and experience, his sons matured into able, dedicated men. Their father now took great pleasure in turning over much administrative responsibility and governing authority to his sons. Each son was placed in charge of one major division — in addition to occupying a seat on the board of directors. As a direct result,

HOW MANY CREATORS?

by Gunar Freibergs

MANY ancient peoples have preserved among their myths an account of the creation of the world. Distorted though such stories may be, they do contain certain basic elements common to other, more reliable ancient documents. The *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the ancient Quiché Maya of Guatemala, for instance, contains a creation story very similar to that found in the Bible. It opens with a vista of emptiness very much like that of Genesis 1:2:

The surface of the earth had not appeared. There was only the calm sea and the great expanse of the sky. There was nothing... There was only immobility and silence in the darkness, in the night (*Popol Vuh*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1950, p. 81).

In this expanse of water and chaotic gloom, then, creation began.

But unlike the conventional concept of a Creator doing all the work, the Maya account speaks of *two* beings. Tepeu and Gucumatz, the "Creator" and the "Maker," known as the "Forefathers," combined their efforts for the task:

Tepeu and Gucumatz came together in the darkness... and talked together... discussing and deliberating; they agreed, they united their words and their thoughts... Then they planned the creation, and the growth of the trees and the thickets, and the birth of life and the creation of man.

The story proceeds then with "Let there be light!", the appearance of dry land, plants, animals and man, much as in Genesis.

But why *two* creators instead of one? Surely, if the inhabitants of Central America could remember and maintain — independent of the Biblical record — the less important details about the creation, they ought to have a pretty good idea about who did the creating. Yet

they speak of *two* creating beings instead of *one*.

The point is, of course, that the Mayas are absolutely right on this particular point! Even in speaking of two creators they have actually retained a detail not commonly understood outside the original Hebrew context of the Genesis record. For the Bible, too, shows there were *two* distinct personalities involved in creation, not one as commonly assumed.

When Genesis 1:1 opens with: "In the beginning God...", the Hebrew word for "God" used here is *Elohim*. It is in the *plural*, designating more than one. The English translators unfortunately did not perceive this, and hence simply rendered *Elohim* in the singular as "God." Yet the sense of plurality was not completely lost, for Genesis 1:26 was correctly translated in accord with the original: "And God said, Let *us* make man in *our* image."

Most professing Christians would find it alien to conceive of more than one being as the creator. Yet *Elohim* expresses plurality in a uniplural sense. The word means "God," but in a family relationship. The New Testament speaks of "God the Father" and "God the Son," the One who became Jesus. They are two distinct beings, but both are God, *Elohim*. Both of them have been together since eternity. "In the beginning was the Word [the Son], and the Word was with God [the Father], and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Together they planned the creation, and God the Son carried it out (John 1:3; Col. 1:16).

Thus the Bible reveals that there were actually two spirit beings — two distinct personalities who united their efforts in the creation — exactly as the Maya account so surprisingly relates.

the business was able to expand enormously in many directions at once. The father, of course, still presided over and ran the whole operation — yet it was the collective strength of his sons which made the family corporation grow great. The sons, of course, enjoyed the same *quality* of life as did their father — intellectually and financially — but the father would always remain somewhat richer in all areas. The sons counseled and advised their father on all decisions — but the father would always be the boss. His word would always be final. Everybody thoroughly loved his work — and his life. A family atmosphere prevailed. And when each son would have his own sons, the ruling family would geometrically increase. And the family corporation would continue to grow.

So it will be when human beings become Sons in the eternally ruling God Family.

Exactly so.

After being nurtured and trained in this physical life, after receiving all the proper education and experience, we will be able to assume the positions of enormous responsibility and authority which Almighty God will take great pleasure in sharing with us. At that time, each individual Son will have precisely the same relationship with God the Father in administering the entire universe as human sons have with their physical father today when they help administer their large family corporation. And, in the very same analogous manner, we, as Sons of God, will enjoy the same quality of life that God the Father enjoys.

Furthermore, as strange as it sounds, we will counsel and advise our Creator Father — we will have suggestions and opinions which will actually help God the Father administer all reality, suggestions and opinions which will be original and unique.

Life will be scintillating. Eternity could never get boring: "In thy [God's] presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalm 16:11).

And the God Family will forever expand beyond all the bounds which our restricted human imaginations have erected. □