

We Shall Be God

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I am going into this subject because it is one of about three or four that we receive quite a number of letters about from people in the world. It is usually because they do not agree with us regarding this. They generally feel that we are really going beyond the Scriptures—that we are perhaps even blaspheming in what we are saying regarding this—but it is nonetheless true. It kind of ranks right up there with the “eternal security” doctrine, which basically tells us that we can never, ever lose salvation, it seems, under any circumstance once we are under the blood of Jesus Christ. Well, I do not think that Scripture teaches that at all—although, we should not *fear* that we are going to lose our salvation either. If you have the faith, and use it, and you will be in God’s Kingdom.

Another doctrine that is one that we receive comments on—usually negative—is our position regarding works. We believe that we are required by God to respond to Him in obedience, and that obedience is *works*. I guess we put enough emphasis on that and it sort of stirs people against us and they begin to pick at us somewhat.

The one that we are going to look at this evening is that our destiny is to be God. This they consider to be blasphemous—that we are going to beyond what Scripture says—but I hope that I am able to give you a logical sequence here so that you will see that it indeed is scriptural. Toward the end I will qualify it in a way so that you can understand even better that we are not going beyond what the scriptures say.

I am going to begin, though, with the concept of the immortality of the soul, which is what almost everybody in the Western world seems to believe. They probably picked it up from the Catholic Church primarily, but we cannot exclude the Protestant churches either because the overwhelming majority of them also believe—and they feel that it is based on Scripture—that man has an immortal soul. But I think that most of us would have to conclude—if we are honest with the scriptures and what we understand from the scriptures—that that belief is completely irrational.

People offer as proof of this anecdotal evidence that either comes from their own personal experience, or things that they have heard from close friends and relatives—that they had experiences with a ghost, apparitions of other kinds, that they have heard voices, there have been thumps in the night, that there was somebody who supposedly died and they followed that light all the way to the end of the tunnel—you know, that kind of stuff.

But the Bible supports no such concept at all. When you die, you are dead like Rover all over. There is nothing that goes beyond that. In those experiences that they have had, they are dealing with personalities who have a different form of life altogether. Of course, those are demons, and they are living, and they never died. So people have had experiences with those things, but the common thing is to turn those experiences into an experience with a departed loved one, or at least someone that they knew in their life.

At the base of this is that human nature does not naturally believe the Bible. It is something that is beyond them. They do not have the spiritual mind to accept it in most cases, so they do not accept it. They hold to this belief that man, at the end of his life, goes into like a secondary existence, and his

soul goes off to heaven or to hell. (It has been my experience that "everybody" "goes to heaven"—except for the neighborhood drunk.) But those things are not true.

The Bible, if one believes it, clearly shows that there is indeed solid, sound reason to hope that one may live beyond the grave—but the reason is not because we have life inherent. So here we begin to show you the plain, unadorned answer, and we going to begin in the Old Testament in Leviticus 18. In a way we see one minor source of this idea of immortality. It is a very familiar scripture to all of you.

Leviticus 18:5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.

This verse indeed does mean this: God is saying, “If you keep My law, you will live in My favor.” However, through the centuries some twisted individuals turned this into a promise, teaching that the keeping of God’s law would lead to eternal life. It was primarily the Israelitish people and the Jews that did this. It at least partly led to their very great concern in Jesus’ time to keep the law perfectly in order to go off to heaven after death. It was a sincere belief, but it was not based on Scripture.

We are going to go to Romans, where Paul quotes this scripture in a context taken as he needed it for what he was explaining at that time:

Romans 10:5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, “The man who does those things shall live by them.”

That is Leviticus 18:5, used in a New Testament concept. But when we put what Paul was showing here, or saying here, in quoting that verse together with the entire context of Romans 9-11, Paul was showing both here in Romans 10 and also in Galatians 3—whenever he quoted it again—that the understanding that the Jews had was not true because it is based in an impossibility. Man cannot keep God’s laws, and because God is what He is, He would not enter into giving man an impossible situation to meet. That would be totally unfair of God.

So, Paul clarified that in this rather long context—Romans 9-11—and actually we could join it together with what Paul said in Romans 4, too, about justification by grace through faith. That really puts a lid on that. God is saying nowhere in His Word that the keeping of the commandments will give a person eternal life. It certainly will *improve* a person’s life, and in doing it they will live in God’s favor. But we learn absolutely—so simply—from Adam and Eve that all you have to do is break one law, one time, and that is it. They committed a sin. God said, “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die,” and that was it. That stands for all men for all time.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The wages of sin is death. It is not transition into another form of life. God means exactly what He says. “The soul that sins, *it shall die.*” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) It will not go into another form of life. *It is dead.* A “soul” is just a creature—it does not matter if it is a dog, a cat, or a human. When that creature dies, they are dead. That is why I said that if we believe the Bible, it solves this question immediately.

That scripture also says that the gift of God is eternal life. Here begins our hope. God, by a *gift*, is willing to give people life beyond the grave. So we have that hope beginning to form before us. This hope is created by God's calling, God's grace, Christ's sacrifice, and believing in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who *did* rise from the dead. This is exceedingly important. God has placed the hope of eternal life before us, and the fact that Jesus was resurrected shows mankind that God is willing to carry through on His promise for those who meet the conditions: they have to be called; they have to repent; they have to receive His Spirit, and so forth. But at the bottom line, this whole thing rests on God's gift.

We are going to go from here to Acts 2—that sermon that Peter preached on Pentecost which I personally believe was one of the most meaningful sermons that was ever preached on the face of this earth. Guess what the subject is: the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:22-24 Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.

Acts 2:29-32 Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

I want you to mark in your mind that the proof that we have this gift—and therefore this hope—was the fact that Jesus was resurrected.

The personality here is the apostle Paul:

Acts 17:17 Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the Gentile worshippers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there.

Acts 17:30-32 “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.” And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, “We will hear you again on this matter.”

The resurrection is not going off to heaven or to hell immediately after death. It was central to *all* of the apostles' preaching.

So now a question: can those who witnessed this be trusted? It is very interesting that God wants to make sure that as much of mankind as possible is aware of this, takes knowledge of it, and hopefully it will lead to their salvation too.

Are you aware that no book like the Bible even comes close to what God caused to be preserved—even early publications of it? There are over 5,000 ancient Greek manuscripts of the New Testament alone. In addition to that, all Christian groups use the same basic New Testament text, regardless of where they are located—whether it is in China, Japan, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, the United States—they all use basically the same text.

It is very easy for someone living today to perhaps toss off the record the apostles left in their words. Look at how many humanists there are in the United States of America. They just throw that stuff away. However, one cannot casually toss off what the apostles did with their lives because of the resurrection. These were sane, sound-minded men.

We will not go through it, but you might want to put down in your notes II Corinthians 11:21-27, where Paul gives a listing of the kind of things he experienced as he was walking around the Mediterranean world to preach the gospel. All except John lived exhausting, very unpopular lives as itinerant preachers in a hostile world, and then all except John suffered a painful death as a martyr at the very end of those unpopular lives—as martyrs because of what they experienced with Jesus, and most especially that included His resurrection.

In other words, these sound-minded, sane men *willingly* chose to give themselves to constantly-threatened, itinerant, rigorous lives because of the resurrection that they witnessed. That resurrection, based on their lives, was *not* a hoax. They *witnessed* it. He was *dead*, and three days later He was alive. His body was torn to shreds, and three days later it was whole, and He was able to walk through walls without opening the doors.

They were not alone in their witnessing of this resurrection:

I Corinthians 15:3-8 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once [like a whole congregation was there], of whom the greater part remain to the present [This was probably written in the mid-50s AD; it was 20-some years after the fact—these people were still alive.], but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

Jesus' resurrection was not the only one which took place at that time:

Matthew 27:51-53 Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

In order to reinforce what God was going to do, three days later—BOOM!—these people whom others knew from the community had died, and they were also followers of Jesus Christ, came up out of the ground alive. That must have been a frightening thing—joyous, maybe for the families (“Oh, I thought I’d never see you again!”), but it was part of the witness that God made. He not only raised Jesus, He raised others in the community as a witness.

I Corinthians 15:12-19 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. [That is how important that resurrection is.] Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

A resurrection is far different from the kind of existence that most think of in terms of life after death. A resurrection is a complete reconstituting of life *at least* as good as it was before death.

I put that qualifier in there because of the resurrections shown in Matthew 27 and Lazarus' resurrection. Those people died again. The disease they died of initially was gone—it had been healed—and they were better off, I am sure, than they were before they went into the grave, but they were still going to die again.

The raising of Lazarus was also witnessed by a large number of people, and it was so strongly attested to that the Jewish religious authorities tried to put him to death in order to eliminate the witness being made of the fact that he had truly died and was truly alive.

John 12:1-2 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

John 12:9-11 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead. But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

Nothing regarding Lazarus' death was done in a corner. There was no ghostly floating off to heaven to be with the Lord.

There was a second effect of this resurrection:

John 11:45-53 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees and told them the things Jesus did. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, "What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." And one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." Now this he did not say on his own authority; but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die

for the nation, and not for that nation only, but also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad. Then, from that day on, they plotted to put Him to death.

That resurrection of Lazarus so magnified Jesus before His enemies that it led directly to His death.

In addition to those reported resurrected in Matthew 27, there were also witnessed by the villagers living near, who knew that he died, that there was no floating off to heaven, nor screaming descent into hellfire. Atheists and other skeptics try their hardest to deny it. However, it did occur, and the facts and the witnesses back up that it did occur.

Here is the difference between God and man regarding life after death. The word of God presents factual evidence for what it declares to all the world. His Word is truth, and the truth is that it takes a resurrection, given as a gift, to restore life to a dead person. The only people in the entire history of mankind who have given substantiated evidence of life after death are those who have been resurrected, and that resurrection has been witnessed by many. God backs up His promises by demonstrating their fulfillment with clear witnessing so that we, brethren, can really have *hope*. He is not telling us a fairy tale. It is not daydreaming.

I think that this is, in a way, a good example of how people do not really believe God or understand what His Word means. The terms “death” and “dead” mean “without life.” Life has ceased, and if a person has simply moved on to another dimension, then they really are not dead. He said to Adam and Eve right at the beginning of the Book: “In the day that you eat thereof you shall surely *die*.” He meant what He said. He did not say, “In the day that you eat thereof, you will surely move on to a different form of life.”

How many people were actually witnesses of Jesus and Lazarus and the resurrection of those people in the villages surrounding Jerusalem? I am sure that at least by word of mouth it was up in the tens of thousands. Just a guess. It does not say that in the book. John was very conservative—he counted it out exactly in number—but there were others, I am sure.

Let us go to another key scripture. This one ought to be in your memory banks:

Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

Everybody’s life must end at least once. I say “at least once” because there are people like Lazarus who had to die more than once.

So everybody, then, is going to experience another thing:

John 5:28-29 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

This then means, brethren, that not only is everybody going to die once, but everybody is also going to be resurrected once. They will not all be resurrected at the same time, but they are all going to be resurrected *one* time. Some will be resurrected to eternal life; others will be resurrected and they will die again.

The question for the remainder of this study does not concern when either resurrection will occur, but what is the overall purpose toward which God is aiming? The overwhelming percentage of those writing in to criticize does not disagree with a resurrection. They disagree with what we teach God desires to resurrect one to. We teach that God is reproducing Himself, and therefore the resurrection is to a God-being. They believe this is blasphemy, because that would make one equal with God.

Let us reason together. We are going to go back to the Old Testament to the book of Job:

Job 1:6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them.

Adam and Eve were children of God by creation, and so are all their progeny—and that means you and me too. Now angels, who are spirit beings, are designated by the Bible also as “sons of God.” Angels and mankind have something in common: both are products of a fiat creation.

A fiat creation is one that occurs as a result of a command or a decree. God commanded—God decreed—in Genesis 1:3, “Let there be light,” and light instantaneously appeared. That is a fiat creation. Thus it was with the creation of angels and mankind.

In II Corinthians 5:17, Paul says that we are a new creation. But what is going on within us is a far different process than a fiat creation. What God is creating in and through us is not accomplished this way.

I am going to say something that is a little difficult, but I cannot think of a better, shorter way to say it: What God is doing in us is creating by means of a cooperative time- and experience-consuming process, working between the Creator and the created in devotion to a common cause. This production is far different, and has a different purpose, from a fiat creation.

We are going to read a section of Romans that is really informative, beautiful, and inspiring:

Romans 8:1-17 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are

sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself 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 8:22-25 For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.

Paul is addressing here the creative process that we are going through right now. Verses 1-8 set the stage, and give a brief and partial answer for the purpose of the creation that we are involved in. The key terms are “walk,” “flesh,” “spirit,” and “carnal”, and *all* are to be understood figuratively, or symbolically, otherwise they make very little meaningful sense.

“Walk” indicates “to live; to move through one’s life toward a destination involved in life’s daily activities.” That appears in verses 1 and 4.

“According to the flesh” appears in verse 4. It represents *walking*—remember, you are going toward a destination—motivated and guided by the nature, the heart that all mankind is endowed with from a natural, normal, physical birth, and life in this world dominated by Satan. That is what has to be overcome, brethren.

“Carnal” is another term (verses 6-7). It figuratively means “natural” or “normal.” It is what we are born with.

“According to the spirit” appears in verse 4. It represents walking, motivated and guided not by the nature all mankind is naturally endowed with by a normal birth, but by the Holy Spirit, given by God by means of being born again through His calling, repentance, and baptism.

Verses 6-8 are especially important toward telling us why this gift of God is necessary: To be motivated by the natural—that is, the carnal—mind leads only to death because by nature it is at war against God and therefore it absolutely cannot please Him. What has to be changed is our motivation.

Verses 9-11 specifically inform us of the difference between those in the flesh and those in the spirit. Those in the spirit have Christ dwelling in them by that spirit. Those in the flesh are thus not Christian at all. Those in the flesh are bound to die—absolutely. Those in the spirit, because they remain justified with Christ’s imputed righteousness, will be given life, and this implies *eternal life* because they already had life before justification. So this life must be something greater than what they already had.

Verses 12-14 exhort us to understand that we have no obligation whatever to live according to the standards of sinful human nature, and if we do, we die. It is that simple. God is very blunt, because this is a life and death issue for you and me. Paul then reminds us that if we follow the guidance of God’s Spirit, we will live! I do not know how the apostle could make it any clearer. We are in the middle; we have to choose.

Verses 15-19 place this entire discourse into a family context by Paul's use of "adoption," "Father," and "children." Do you see what he means? All of this is taking place within a family—God's family—and God's children have both natures in them. Then he carries his illustration beyond the human family by stating that we will be glorified together with Christ.

Verses 22-25 tell us that at this point we are saved, eagerly awaiting the hope of glory. This begins to get pretty exciting. In the Greek language, "glory" has a fairly large number of applications, but two English words are pretty close synonyms: honor and dignity.

The Greek word is *doxa*. It is #1391 in *Strongs' Concordance*. *Doxa* is used of the nature and acts of God. First, it is what He essentially is in Himself. Second, it is what He does as exhibited in whatever way He reveals Himself. God *is* glory. Every time He appears He practically burns the eyes out of people—His appearance is so glorious. Then what He *does* is *always* glorious, beyond even the glory in His body. It is all done in love, and it is all done to glorify Him as well. So God is glorious, honorable, and of the very highest dignity. Christ was God in the flesh, and that glory, honor, and dignity was exhibited in the character and the acts in the days of His flesh.

Let us sum this up: glory is the state of blessedness which believers are to enter hereafter through being brought into a much fuller likeness of Christ at the resurrection. All you have to do is start thinking about God, and the glory just in looking at Him. If you think I am getting a little off here, I am not—because I Corinthians 15 tells us that we are going to be glorified.

Are not children copies of their parents? We have a saying, "Like father, like son." All of mankind are children of God by creation. However, these sons, being brought to glory, are children by means of a special *spiritual* creation. So Paul is educating us here through this entire section that these children who are led by the Spirit are like the Father in a spiritual manner, not physically. It is this creation that produces the transformation from glory to glory, from human nature to godly nature.

Let us take a look at II Corinthians 3, where God says exactly that:

II Corinthians 3:17-18 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all [Christians], 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.

How can you be the same image and not be God?

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Notice what he is spelling out for us here. It is not just that we are going to be God; we are to rejoice in the hope of the *glory* of God. That takes this hope much further than merely being God. It is guaranteeing us glorification. I mean, real—well, being lit up.

I Peter 5:1 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed. . .

I Peter 5:10 But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.

He has called us to His *eternal* glory.

II Peter 1:3-4 As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

It has already begun. We are being transformed by the divine nature that is within us. God is working through that nature.

We have been given the divine nature, and I do not believe, even for a minute, that the angels, though they appear to be eternal beings, possess the same nature as God or they would *be* God. They have an angelic nature. You already have in you the divine nature. That, brethren, in a sense, is a burden to carry. We need to be thinking about it often. ***What a gift we have been given!*** It is just awesome—the weak of the world.

Philippians 3:21 Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Brethren, a glorious body to match a glorious rank.

I Thessalonians 2:12 That you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

It is almost like it is an added benefit. His Kingdom is His Family, and His Family is all of the same kind, because kind reproduces after kind.

I John 3:1-3 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

“We will never be equal with God,” is the charge that is hurled against what we say. I want you to consider these thoughts, though, because I do not believe this is difficult to deduce using Scripture. I am going to use here a four step process. I want you to consider this with me. You probably will not be doing it too well because I will be going too fast, but you will get enough of it that I think it will kind of thrill you.

I took this last portion from an article by Robert Kuhn (some of you may remember his name) but I thought that it was appropriate and that he was right in what he said here.

In John 5:18, the Jews accused Jesus of making Himself equal with God. Do you know what their basis for concluding that was? He said that He was the Son of God, and they immediately said, “You are equal with God.”

Let us put that into our own human area. The McClures are going to have a baby. When that baby is born, it is going to be about this big, and that baby will be a son or daughter of Ryan and Jenny. Jesus said He was the Son of God. Was He equal with God, even as the Son of God? Do you know that that little baby that they are going to have is going to be equal with Ryan and Jenny?

In what way is it equal with Ryan and Jenny? It is equal in that they are all human. Jesus was God in the flesh.

Here are my four propositions from Robert Kuhn:

1. The Creator of the universe is the One who became Jesus Christ: John 1:13; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2. They all say the same thing—that the creation was through Jesus Christ. Therefore,
2. Jesus stated that He was equal with God in John 5:18. Paul said exactly the same thing in Philippians 2:6—that Jesus did not think it was robbery to be equal with God.
3. We are joint heirs with Christ, and will be glorified together with Him (Romans 8:17). The key is “joint heirs.” Did you ever read anywhere in the Scriptures that Jesus was going to share His inheritance with the angels? No, just His brothers and sisters.
4. Whatever glory, dignity, or honor the Father had given to Christ—for example, the position of Creator—Christ will share with us. In addition to that, He Himself says in John 17:11, 22, that we will be one with the Father and Son. In other words, every converted person will eventually enjoy the same relationship to Christ as Christ presently enjoys with the Father.

Let us define and delineate this glorious future one very necessary step further, so that we can separate this a little bit better—maybe make it clearer and more accurate.

More specifically, this glorification will mean that—get these two adverbs—we will be *qualitatively* equal with God but we will not be *quantitatively* equal with God.

Qualitatively has to do with the degree of excellence of a thing. It has to do with the relative nature or character of a thing. We will say something like this: “Silk is of greater quality than rayon.” In this particular case that we are considering, it is the degree of excellence of a *living* thing or beings.

What this means, then, is that we will be equal with God in terms of *kind*. We will be of the same kind. We will be of the God-kind. Concerning living beings, there is the animal kind, human kind, angel kind, and the highest order is the God-kind. And God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness” (Genesis 1:26). We will share, brethren, the same quality of life as the Father and Son do right now. What an awesome thing.

Quantitatively has to do with the property of a thing that is measurable; an entity regarded as possessing a determinable—it can be measured—magnitude, as of length, size, volume, rank, or number. We measure in inches, pounds, and quarts. Thus *quantity* determines *size* and/or *status*.

In terms of our relationship with Father, Son, and others in the Kingdom of God, it is *rank* that determines quantity. Most assuredly we will *not* be of the same rank within the God-kind as the Father and Son or others.

I Corinthians 15:38-44 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body. [He starts out with plant life.] All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

I Corinthians 15:48-49 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

What this means is that there is going to be rank, and it is going to be shown by the glory that is given. We will be glorified, but we will not have as bright of a glory as God, because His rank is exceedingly higher than ours. That is why Paul mentioned that thing about celestial bodies. You know that when you look up into the sky, and some bodies up there are bright, and some are dim. So it will be with us as well.

I want to close with this thought—this thing about glory: David knew very well that there were going to be different ranks given to those in the Kingdom of God. I will just take one illustration of his: he said, “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord,” and what he did there was name very possibly a very low rank. But still they will be glorified, and they are going to shine, and they will qualitatively be God, just as God is God, and live like God in that sense, but they will quantitatively not be the same as the Father.

You will remember in Mark 10:40, where the mother of James and John came to Jesus and said, “Give one son to be on your right, and the other son on your left.” She did that because she wanted her sons to be placed in a very high rank—not a doorkeeper. She wanted those boys of hers to be way up high.

And there is rank. Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions”—many rooms—to occupy as part of an office.

You and I, brethren, are going to be given a very, very high rank. After the first resurrection is over, nobody—as far as we know—will ever be ranked as high as we are.

Revelation 14:3-4 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These are the ones who were not defiled with women, for they are virgins. These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.

We will be on Jesus Christ's staff. We will be in "Washington, D.C."—actually Jerusalem, of course, but you got the point—at the executive mansion, encamped as it were all around it, occupying offices right in the central governmental structure of the entire creation. That is pretty high, and we are going to shine in awesome glory. We will be God. We will not have the rank of the Father or the Son or any of those who are right closest to Him, but our rank is going to be considerably high.

In summary, each of us has been created to grow toward sonship, to become a literal son of God—a son who in every way is qualitatively equal to our Father because we are the same kind; a son who is always in thankful, gracious submission to our quantitatively greater Creator, Father, and Elder Brother.