

MINISTUDY You were born to Rule!

The Good News, in conjunction with the Correspondence Course Department, presents brief excursions into the study of the Bible, delving into topics relevant to the development of future members of the God Family. Bible study is one means by which Christians are renewed daily (II Cor. 4:16), so let's refresh ourselves with more of the precious truths of God's Word!

Instructions: the format of these ministudies is similar to that of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course. Look up and read in your Bible the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions elaborate on the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated)

Why were you born? What is the purpose for human life? Why are we here? Where are we going, and what will we do when we get there?

The Bible reveals that you were born for a tremendous purpose. But few really grasp the magnitude of the awesome future God offers mankind.

Believe it or not, you were born to rule!

Just as surely as Prince Charles of England was born into Britain's royal family to be a king, you are destined, when "born again into the universe-ruling Family of God, to reign as an even greater and eternal king. Incredible as it may sound, your Bible reveals that you were born to ultimately help rule the universe

To fully understand God's incredible purpose for humankind, we need to go back to the first chapter of Genesis.

1. What do the very first words of the Bible tell us about God? Gen. 1:1.

The original Hebrew word translated God in verse 1 is Elohim. Elohim is a uniplural or collective noun, like the words church, family and kingdom_

In other words, the term Elohim stands for a group composed of two or more individuals. Elohim in Genesis 1:1 means the God Kingdom or Family.

2. But who are the individuals presently composing Elohim? John 1:1-2. Was it the "Word" who created all things? Verse 3. What did the Word later become? Verse 14. Who, then, is the Word? Eph. 3:9. And who is the other divine member of the God Family? I Cor. 8:6.

John 1: 1 and Genesis 1:1 take us back to the same time in prehistory - to the original creation of the universe. Both verses reveal that the two supreme beings composing the God Family created all things.

The Greek word translated into English as Word in John 1:1 is Logos. It means "spokesman" or "one who speaks." It was actually the Logos - the Spokesman, the Word of the God Family - who "spake, and it [the creation] was done" by the power of the Spirit of God (Ps. 33:6-9, 104:30). And so everything was created and made by the divine being who later became the human Jesus Christ.

Nearly 2,000 years ago this same divine personage was begotten in the virgin Mary's womb by God who, through this miraculous begettall, became His Father. Yet at that

prehistoric time of John 1:1 the Word was not yet the Son of God. He was "made" God's Son later, through being begotten or sired by God and born of Mary as a human being.

3. Is the God Family eternal, or ever living? Ps. 90:2, 102:25-27.

Both members of the Godhead have always existed, though our finite human minds can't quite understand how. Neither can we quite understand what electricity is, yet we know electricity exists.

But what does all of this have to do with your being born to rule?

Everything! For God is even now in the process of expanding His universe-ruling Family. And you can become a member of that eternal, spirit-composed Family.

4. After whose "image" and "likeness" was man created? Gen. 1:26-27.

In God's pattern for all life, kind reproduces like kind. And just as each created form of plant or animal life reproduces after its own kind, so humans reproduce humans. But unlike any of the animals God created, man was created in God's own "image" and "likeness." God made man like Himself - same form and shape. And He is now in the process of creating man after His own kind.

Notice again what God said in Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image." The original Hebrew here indicates far more than merely the outward form and shape of God. "Image" also refers to mind and character. God intended for man, to whom He gave the gift of a thinking, reasoning mind, to develop the very mind and character of God.

The attributes of human mind and character truly make man God's unique physical creation. God has shared some of His own qualities with human beings and expects us to develop the "image" of God's perfect mind and holy character.

Simply stated, God is reproducing Himself. All human beings, past, present and future, have the awesome potential to become God's literal children - members of God's own divine Family.

5. Is God still in the process of forming and molding man as a potter works with clay? Isa. 64:8. Did Job realize God was forming a special creation in his life? Job 14:14-15.

Notice the latter part of verse 15: "Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands." The "work" was Job. Job knew he was a piece of divine workmanship in the hands of the Master Potter.

6- Are the Spirit-begotten children of God clearly being fashioned by God for a specific purpose? Eph. 2:10.

"We" in New Testament language usually refers to God's Spirit-begotten children, as Paul intended in verse 10. God's begotten sons are His "workmanship." They are being "created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit He has put into His children (after their repentance and baptism), is forming in His

people His perfect spiritual character. With their obedient cooperation, He is creating in them His own character-image. He is creating them to be the supreme masterpiece of all His works of creation -- individuals who will ultimately be capable of exercising the awesome powers of the God Family.

And so man, the material creation, is only the first phase of this creative process. The clay model has to be fashioned by experience, and with the aid of God's Holy Spirit, into the finished spiritual masterpiece possessing the very character of God.

An analogy of this process would be a caterpillar going through a metamorphosis and emerging as a beautiful butterfly. Humans must undergo a spiritual metamorphosis or change into perfect, spiritual members of the divine Family of God.

7. Does God plainly show that it is His purpose to expand His divine Family by bringing many sons into it? Heb. 2:9-10, Rev. 21:7. Isn't Jesus Christ actually the first of many sons of God? Rom. 8:29, Col. 1:18.

To be conformed to the image of Christ means to become like Him - to be glorified as He is glorified to be part of the divine Family of God as much as Christ now is.

8. But what must happen to flesh-and-blood human beings before they can enter God's Family? I Cor. 15:49-53, John 3:3-8.

Jesus said we must be "born again" changed into spirit. Yes, born again - this time born of the Spirit of God as divine Sons in the Family of God!

Next month we'll study more about this incredibly wonderful truth. And we'll see what life as powerful spirit beings will be like, living and working with Jesus Christ and other born-again members of God's universe-ruling Family.

(This subject to be continued.)

You Were Born to Rule!

In our previous study, we discovered the astounding fact that God is in the process of expanding His Family - that God is actually reproducing Himself through human beings.

Exactly how is God accomplishing this miraculous feat? When can we become literal members of His Family? What is it like to have a spirit body? And what will you be doing forever as a member of the Family of God? This exciting study reveals the surprising answers.

As we learned last issue, human reproduction pictures the process by which God is reproducing Himself. Recall that Jesus told Nicodemus we must be "born again" to become members of God's Family (John 3:3-8).

Each human since Adam and Eve started from a tiny ovum, the size of a pinpoint, produced in his or her mother's body. But unless the egg is fertilized by a life-giving sperm cell from the human father, the egg dies within a short time. A human life can begin only when that sperm cell impregnates or enters the ovum.

Spiritually speaking, each human mind is like an egg. Each of us was born incomplete and able to live only a relatively short time. We were made to need the impregnating spiritual life of God's Holy Spirit in our minds so we could begin growing spiritually before being born of the Spirit and living forever.

1. Are true Christians already, during this mortal life, God's children? I John 3:1-2. Are they therefore inheritors of God's Kingdom, or only "heirs" to it? Rom. 8:14-17.

Notice that although they are now the children of God, Christians are only heirs - ones who shall, in the future inherit the glory of God's Family with Jesus; Christ. Why only heirs? Because they are now only Spirit-begotten children. It is when they are born of God that they become members of God's Family.

2. Must the Spirit-begotten child of God grow spiritually before being born of God, much like a newly begotten human must grow physically in its mother's womb until it is born? II Pet. 3:18, I Pet. 2:1-2.

After God the father begets a person by imparting His spiritual life to that person's mind (upon true repentance of sin and then water baptism), the person must begin to grow in spiritual character. This growth comes about through Bible study, prayer and walking with God through obedience to Him. Thus all Spirit-begotten Christians are now the unborn children of God the Father in the same sense that an unborn human fetus is the child of its human parents.

3. When will the Christian's spiritual birth take place? I Cor. 15:50-53. When will the resurrection occur? I Thess. 4:15-17. Will those thus resurrected be like God? Ps. 17:15. Of what is God composed? John 4:24. Will Christians be changed to spirit at the resurrection? I Cor. 15:42-49. See also I John 3:2 and Philippians 3:20-21.

When Jesus Christ returns to earth, the Spirit-begotten sons of God who have died through the ages will be resurrected, and those still alive will be instantly changed into spirit beings. At that moment, they will be "born again" as members of God's own Family. And God's own offspring will then have eternal life inherent within themselves - just like Jesus Christ their elder brother.

4. To what did Jesus compare one who is born of the Spirit? John 3:8.

When you are "born again," born of the Spirit of God, you will be invisible to mortal eyes unless you choose to manifest yourself. The effects of the wind are easily discernible, but the wind itself cannot be seen.

5. After His resurrection, was Jesus, with His spirit-composed body, able to suddenly appear and disappear? Luke 24:36-37. Was He able to pass through walls? John 20:19, 26. Can one composed of spirit transform himself into mortal flesh and bone when necessary, and even eat if he so desires? Luke 24:38-43.

6. Are spirit bodies capable of traveling through space faster than light? Compare John 20:17, 19-20 with Matthew 28:9. Earlier in the day Christ would not let His disciples touch Him because He had not yet ascended to heaven. But later that day He did allow them to touch

Him. Christ traveled to the Father in heaven and returned to earth on the same day.

"Truth is stranger than fiction," goes the old saying. The marvelous, exciting truth about your awesome potential as revealed in the Bible pales into nothingness any science fiction thriller you could read!

7. Was Jesus "glorified" again after His resurrection? John 17:4-5, Heb. 2:9. Had He previously given His disciples a fleeting glimpse of this glorified condition? Matt. 17:1-2. How does Christ's glorified body appear today? Rev. 1:13-16.

To be "glorified" means to be given great power and brightness. Jesus Christ had a glorious, powerful spirit body like His Father's before He became a human being. After His resurrection, He was restored to the same power and glory. Christ's face and powerful spirit body now radiate light as the sun in full strength, with eyes blazing like flames of fire.

8. Will God also glorify all of His Spirit-begotten children at the resurrection by giving them this same great power and glory? Rom. 8:17, Col. 3:4, Dan. 12:2-3.

The ultimate glory that Spirit-begotten children of God are to receive at the resurrection will be so great it will make them shine like brilliant stars. But that's only a part of what God has in store for those who cooperate with Him in developing God's own character while yet human beings.

9. What will the sons of God begin to do after becoming part of His spirit Family? Rev. 3:21, 2:26, 5:10, 20:4-6.

The Kingdom of God is a ruling Family. And those who become a part of that Family are destined to rule the earth with Jesus Christ for 1,000 years. They will become kings and priests, ruling and teaching in the world-ruling Kingdom of God!

Billions of people will learn to live God's way and be born into His ruling Family during this period. Then, after the Millennium, still more billions who died without knowing of God's way of life will be resurrected and given the opportunity to become sons of God. This period of "judgment" (Rev. 20:11-13) will, apparently, last 100 years (Isa. 65:20).

These additional billions will be added to God's spirit Family at the conclusion of God's plan for physical mankind.

It has been estimated that 40 billion people may have lived from the time of Adam until now. It would be difficult to accurately estimate the number of people who will yet be born and enter

God's Kingdom during the Millennium and Great White Throne judgment periods. There no doubt will be multiple billions.

But let's suppose that 200 000,000,000 (200 billion) are ultimately born into God's Family. Since God is always busy working, creating and sustaining what He has created (John 5:17), He knows His sons could not be happy unless busy working and producing. And so what could keep this incredibly huge Family of God Beings busy for eternity?

10. Just how great is the authority Jesus Christ has already inherited? Heb. 1:1-2, Matt. 28:18. Will those who are born into God's Family share in that inheritance as co-owners and co-rulers with Christ? Rom. 8:16- 17, Rev. 2 1:7. And will God's government continue to expand for all eternity? Isa. 9:6-7, Rev. 22:5

The Moffatt translation renders "all things" in Hebrews 1:2 as "the universe." Incredible as it may sound, your ultimate potential and the potential of every human being is co-rulership of the universe with Jesus Christ and God the Father!

But is there really enough ' out there" for our estimated number of 200 billion spirit sons of God to rule?

Astronomers estimate that there are more than 40,000,000,000,000,000,000 (40 sextillion) stars that are suns to other planets. This figure is virtually impossible to comprehend. If our estimate of 200 billion sons of God is accurate, that means each member of God's Family would be responsible for maintaining and developing 200 billion stars and their attendant planets. Those stars and planets would make up a galaxy twice the estimated size of our own Milky Way galaxy!

This is your awesome potential - the glorious destiny God has in store for those who seek to do His will and follow His way. Yes, you were born to rule!

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