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Mini Study

Can Man Become God?

...I say to you, Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3pp)

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality (1 Corinthians 15:53)

There's a persistent religious belief that, in some way, human beings can be transformed into God-beings. The Hindu attains reunion with Brahma through a succession of lives and the suppression of individual existence. In Buddhism "Nirvana" [from the Sanskrit *extinction*] is also achieved by means of the extinction of the self. Mormons, too, believe there's a "divine spark" in us. What is man's ultimate destiny? *Can* man become God?

- there's an almost universal belief that man has two basic elements - body and soul, the physical and the spiritual. The body will die (we can prove that) but the soul is immortal (we must take that as unproven)
- the origin of the soul is variously understood. For some, it is passed from generation to generation. Others believe each soul originates uniquely at conception or at birth. Yet others conceive of a "store" of souls in heaven ready to inhabit each new-born
- the Christian Scriptures, however, tell us that the "soul" can die (Ezekiel 18:20). The "soul" (Hebrew *nephesh*) is simply all that is our physical life force: mental, emotional, physical ("*For the life of the flesh [soul] [is] in the blood:...*" (Leviticus 17:11) - and upon death it ceases to have a conscious existence. Until, that is, supernaturally resurrected
- it is this almost universal belief in an "immortal soul" that underlies the human ideas of immortality
- the teaching of the Christian Scriptures, however, is that "[*God*] *only has immortality*" (I Timothy 6:16). Immortality - "Godness" - implies existence from eternity past until eternity in the future: "*...the same yesterday, today and forever*" (Hebrews 13:8). "*God is spirit*" (John 4:24) - *holy Spirit*
- man is mortal. For humans, immortality is a state we "*put on*" (I Corinthians 15:53), something we "*seek for*" (Romans 2:7), something "*brought to light by the Gospel*" (II Timothy 1:10)
- in sum, man born of woman is mortal, and does not have within him any inherent divinity. We don't have immortality and we don't inherit it from our parents. It's not in human beings to live beyond the grave.
- to live for ever we must therefore depend upon an external power - upon God. And He has indeed provided a path for us to become immortal. So how do we attain to immortality - the goal to which we aspire? Just *how* is immortality revealed by "*the Gospel*"?
- *there is but one way*. The Gospel message is: "*Repent and be baptized, each of you in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit*" (Acts 2:38). Turn to God's way of life, be baptized, be cleansed from sin (through the sacrificial death of Jesus) - and you will be given immortality. Only by the implanted Spirit of God can we live forever. It is by means of a resurrection from among the dead to spirit (non-corporeal) life (I Corinthians 15: 51-54)

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- the Spirit *is* God. By virtue of the holy Spirit dwelling in the Christian we have immortality: “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Colossians 1:27). We will die, the flesh will decay. But if the Spirit of God is in us we will arise from the grave to live eternally. Because - and only because - God dwells in us by His Spirit will we “be God”. We are - now - “*the sons of God*” (I John 3:2, Romans 8:16) *if* God’s Spirit is in us
- our character - how we now live - is grafted on to the divine Spirit in us, and on death is retained by God until our resurrection. That surely must influence the way we now conduct our lives (II Peter 3:11, 17)

(All Scripture references are KJV unless otherwise noted. [pp:paraphrased])

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