

Can We Become Like God?

Theosis, Deification, and Human Destiny in Biblical Perspective

Introduction: More Than Just Creatures?

The Question: Are humans simply creatures—like advanced pets who will forever remain infinitely inferior to God? Or does the Bible teach that humans have a divine potential—that we can genuinely become like God, sharing in His nature?

The Protestant Concern:

Many evangelicals and Protestants believe that: - God is the Creator; humans are creatures - The Creator-creature distinction is absolute and eternal - Any teaching that humans can “become gods” is blasphemy - We remain forever subordinate to God, never sharing in His divine nature

The Alternative View:

Both Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Latter-day Saint theology teach that humans have divine potential—that through Christ, we can become partakers of the divine nature, joint-heirs with Christ, and ultimately be glorified together with Him.

This document examines: 1. What the Bible actually says about human destiny 2. What the early Church taught about theosis/deification 3. The Protestant interpretation and its limitations 4. The Latter-day Saint perspective on exaltation

Part I: What Does the Bible Say?

1. We Are Created in God’s Image and Likeness

Genesis 1:26-27 (NRSV): > “Then God said, ‘Let us make humankind **in our image, according to our likeness**; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over the cattle and over all the wild animals of the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.’ So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”

The Question:

If God is absolutely, infinitely different from us—if we’re merely creatures who can never share in His nature—what does “image and likeness” mean?

Hebrew Words: - תְּצֵלֶם (**tselem**) = “image” — Used elsewhere for physical idols/statues (1 Sam 6:5, Ezek 7:20) - דְּמוּת (**demuth**) = “likeness” — Similarity, resemblance

Key Observations: - The text uses BOTH words (“image” AND “likeness”)—emphasizing the connection - The same Hebrew word (tselem) is used for physical representations/idols - Humans are given “dominion”—a share in God’s creative governance

2. We Are Children of God, Not Just Creatures

Romans 8:14-17 (NRSV): > “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are **children of God**. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of **adoption**. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are **children of God**, and if children, then **heirs: heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ**—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that **we may also be glorified with him.**”

Key Terms:

- **Children of God** (τέκνα θεοῦ, *tekna theou*) — Not just “created beings” but offspring
- **Heirs of God** (κληρονόμοι θεοῦ, *klēronomoi theou*) — We inherit what God has
- **Joint heirs with Christ** (συγκληρονόμοι Χριστοῦ, *synklēronomoi Christou*) — We share Christ’s inheritance equally
- **Glorified with him** (συνδοξασθῶμεν, *syndoxasthōmen*) — We will share in His glory

The Logic:

1. If we are God’s children (not just creatures), we share His nature as offspring
2. If we are heirs of God, we inherit what belongs to God
3. If we are **joint heirs with Christ**, we share **equally** in the inheritance
4. If we are **glorified with Him**, we share in His divine glory

Question for Protestants:

If we’re “joint heirs with Christ,” what exactly do we inherit? If Christ inherits divine glory, authority, and power—and we’re **joint heirs**—don’t we share in that?

3. We Are Partakers of the Divine Nature

2 Peter 1:3-4 (NRSV): > “His divine power has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may **escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust and may become participants in the divine nature** (θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως, *theias koinōnoi physeōs*).”

Greek Analysis:

- **θείας** (*theias*) = “divine” (from θεός, *theos*, “God”)
- **κοινωνοὶ** (*koinōnoi*) = “partakers, sharers, partners, participants”
- **φύσεως** (*physeōs*) = “nature, essence”

The Plain Reading:

We become **partakers/participants** in the **divine nature**—not just recipients of grace, but sharers in God’s very nature.

Protestant Reinterpretation:

“This means we receive divine help to live holy lives, not that we become divine.”

The Problem with This:

- The text doesn’t say “receive help from the divine nature”
- It says we **become partakers/participants IN the divine nature**
- The Greek word *koinōnoi* means genuine sharing/partnership (used in Luke 5:10 for business partners)
- Paul uses the same root word in **Philippians 3:10** (“that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share [κοινωνία, *koinōnia*] in his sufferings”)

If we “share in Christ’s sufferings,” why can’t we share in His divine nature?

4. We Shall Be Like Him

1 John 3:2 (NRSV): > “Beloved, we are God’s children now; **what we will be has not yet been revealed**. What we do know is this: **when he is revealed, we will be like him**, for we will see him as he is.”

Key Points:

- Our future state “has not yet been revealed”—we don’t fully know what we’ll become
- **We will be like Him**—not “a little bit like Him” or “similar to Him in character,” but genuinely **like Him**
- This transformation occurs when we see Him as He is

Matthew 5:48 (NRSV): > “**Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**”

The Greek Word:

- **τέλειοι** (*teleioi*) = “perfect, complete, mature, fully developed”

Jesus doesn’t say: - “Try to be a little bit better” - “Be as perfect as you can manage” - “Imitate God in small ways”

He says: Be perfect **AS your heavenly Father is perfect.**

The standard is divine perfection, not creaturely improvement.

5. Jesus Called Humans “Gods”

John 10:34-36 (NRSV): > “Jesus answered, ‘Is it not written in your law, **“I said, you are gods”**’? If those **to whom the word of God came were called ‘gods’**—and the scripture cannot be annulled—can you say that the one whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world is blaspheming because I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?”

The Reference: Psalm 82:6 (NRSV): > **“I say, ‘You are gods, children of the Most High, all of you; nevertheless, you shall die like mortals and fall like any prince.”**”

Jesus’s Argument:

1. The Scripture (Psalm 82:6) calls certain humans “gods” (אֱלֹהִים, *elohim*)
2. Jesus says this refers to **“those to whom the word of God came”**—likely Israelites who received the law
3. **If Scripture calls humans “gods,” it’s not blasphemy for Jesus to call Himself God’s Son**

The Implications:

- Jesus affirms that **humans can be called “gods”** based on Scripture
- He doesn’t say “That’s just a metaphor” or “They weren’t really gods”
- He uses this as a defense: **If humans can be gods, why can’t the Son of God claim deity?**

The Question:

If humans can’t become gods in any real sense, why did Jesus use this as an argument?

The Protestant Explanation:

“‘Gods’ in Psalm 82:6 refers to human judges who represented God’s authority—they weren’t actually divine.”

The Problem:

- If “gods” is purely metaphorical (just meaning “judges”), Jesus’s argument loses force
- Jesus is defending His claim to actual deity, not merely representing God
- **The argument only works if there’s a genuine continuity between humans called “gods” and Jesus as the Son of God**

6. We Will Judge Angels and Rule with Christ

1 Corinthians 6:2-3 (NRSV): > “Do you not know that **the saints will judge the world**? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? **Do you not know that we are to judge angels**—to say nothing of ordinary matters?”

Revelation 3:21 (NRSV): > “To the one who conquers I will give a place with me **on my throne**, just as I myself conquered and **sat down with my Father on his throne.**”

Revelation 2:26-27 (NRSV): > “To the one who conquers and continues to do my works to the end, **I will give authority over the nations**; to rule them with an iron rod, as when clay pots are shattered—even as I also received authority from my Father.”

What the Bible Says We Will Do:

1. **Judge the world** (1 Cor 6:2)
2. **Judge angels** (1 Cor 6:3)
3. **Sit on Christ’s throne with Him** (Rev 3:21)
4. **Rule nations** (Rev 2:26-27)
5. **Reign forever** (Rev 22:5)

The Question:

If we’re merely creatures who will never share God’s nature, how can we: - Judge angels (who are spiritual beings)? - Sit on Christ’s throne? - Rule nations with divine authority?

Doesn’t this require participation in divine nature and power?

7. We Are Being Transformed Into His Image

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NRSV): > “And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, **are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another**, for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.”

Key Observations:

- **Present continuous transformation** (“are being transformed”)
- **Into the same image**—Christ’s image, which is the image of God (Col 1:15)
- **From one degree of glory to another**—progressive, increasing transformation
- **Glory to glory**—we’re moving from one level of glory to another

Romans 8:29 (NRSV): > “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined **to be conformed to the image of his Son**, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family.”

Philippians 3:20-21 (NRSV): > “But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. **He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory**, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself.”

The Trajectory:

1. We are being transformed into Christ’s image
2. Christ is the image of God (2 Cor 4:4, Col 1:15)
3. This transformation is progressive (“glory to glory”)
4. Our bodies will be conformed to Christ’s glorious body

If Christ's body is glorified and divine, and our bodies will be "conformed" to His, what does that make us?

8. God's Plan: To Unite All Things in Christ

Ephesians 1:9-10 (NRSV): > "He has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, **to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**"

Ephesians 1:22-23 (NRSV): > "And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, **which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.**"

Colossians 1:19 (NRSV): > "For in him **all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell**, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross."

Key Concept:

- Christ is the head; the Church is His body
- The Church is "the fullness of him who fills all in all"
- **In Christ, all the fullness of God dwells**
- We are being united with Christ

If we are Christ's body, and Christ contains the fullness of God, don't we share in that fullness?

Part II: What Did the Early Church Teach?

The Doctrine of Theosis (Deification)

Theosis (θεώσις) is the Eastern Orthodox Christian doctrine that humans can become like God, participating in His divine nature while remaining distinct persons.

This was NOT a fringe belief—it was mainstream Christianity for the first 1,000+ years.

Irenaeus of Lyon (c. 130-202 AD)

Quote: > "For it was for this reason that the Word of God became man, and the Son of God became the Son of Man: **that man, by entering into communion with the Word and thus receiving divine sonship, might become a son of God...** For we have not been made gods from the beginning, but at first merely men, then **at length gods.**"

Source: *Against Heresies*, Book 3, Chapter 19; Book 4, Preface

Meaning: Humans progress from being merely men to becoming gods through union with Christ.

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215 AD)

Quote: > “The Word of God became man, **that you may learn from man how man may become God.**”

Source: *Exhortation to the Greeks*, Chapter 1

Athanasius of Alexandria (296-373 AD)

Quote: > “For **He became man that we might become god...** He, indeed, assumed humanity that **we might become God.**”

Source: *On the Incarnation*, Section 54

This is the most famous statement on theosis in Church history.

Clarification by Athanasius: > “**Becoming by grace what God is by nature.**”

Meaning: - God is divine **by nature** (ontologically, essentially) - We become divine **by grace** (through God’s gift, not by our own power) - We don’t become the uncreated God; we become like God through participation

Gregory of Nazianzus (329-390 AD)

Quote: > “Man is commanded to become ‘god’; he is commanded to become ‘**god**’ **by his participation in the divine glory**, and not merely ‘god’ in name.”

Source: *Oration 30.14*

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD)

Even in the Western Church, Augustine taught deification:

Quote: > “But **He that justifies also deifies**, for by justifying He makes sons of God. ‘For He has given them power to become the sons of God’ (John 1:12). **If then we have been made sons of God, we have also been made gods:** but this is the effect of grace adopting, not of nature generating.”

Source: *On Psalm 50, 2*

C.S. Lewis (20th Century Protestant)

Even modern Protestants have affirmed something like theosis:

Quote: > “The command ‘Be ye perfect’ is not idealistic gas. Nor is it a command to do the impossible. **He is going to make us into creatures that can obey that command.** He said (in the Bible) that we were ‘gods’ and He is going to make good

on that. **If we let Him—for we can prevent Him, if we choose—He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into a god or goddess**, a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) His own boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what He said.”

Source: *Mere Christianity*, Book IV, Chapter 9

Part III: The Protestant Interpretation

The Standard Evangelical View

Mainstream Protestant theology teaches:

- 1. The Creator-creature distinction is absolute and eternal**
 - God is uncreated; humans are created
 - This distinction can never be overcome
 - Humans will forever be infinitely inferior to God
- 2. “Partakers of the divine nature” means moral transformation**
 - We receive God’s help to live holy lives
 - We become more Christ-like in character
 - But we don’t actually share in God’s divine nature
- 3. “Heirs of God” means we inherit blessings, not divinity**
 - We receive eternal life
 - We receive God’s love and favor
 - But we don’t inherit God’s essential nature
- 4. “You are gods” in Psalm 82 is metaphorical**
 - Refers to human judges who represent God’s authority
 - Not a statement about humans becoming divine
 - Jesus was just making a rhetorical point

Protestant Concerns About Theosis

1. Pantheism/Monism

- If humans become God, does that mean we’re absorbed into God?
- Does this eliminate the distinction between Creator and creature?

2. Polytheism

- If humans become gods, does that mean there are multiple gods?
- Doesn’t this contradict monotheism?

3. Works Righteousness

- Does theosis imply we earn divinity through our efforts?
- Doesn’t this undermine salvation by grace alone?

4. Human Pride

- Isn't claiming we can become like God the original sin (Genesis 3:5)?
- Doesn't this elevate humanity beyond its proper place?

Responding to Protestant Concerns

1. Theosis Is Not Pantheism

- Orthodox theosis maintains **personal distinction**
- We become like God, not absorbed into God
- We remain creatures who participate in divine nature **by grace**
- Analogy: Iron in fire becomes glowing and hot, but remains iron

2. Theosis Is Not Polytheism

- There is still **one God by nature** (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)
- Humans become gods **by participation**, not by nature
- We're subordinate to God, sharing in His nature through grace
- Analogy: A prince becomes king by inheritance, but there's still one royal family

3. Theosis Is Entirely by Grace

- We cannot achieve divinity on our own
- It's a gift from God through Christ
- **2 Peter 1:4** says God "has given us" these promises
- We participate in divine nature through what **God has done**, not our efforts

4. Theosis Is Not Pride—It's God's Plan

- The serpent's lie was "You will be like God **without God**" (Genesis 3:5)
 - Theosis teaches we become like God **through God, in God's way, by God's grace**
 - God's plan was always for us to become His children and heirs
 - **It's not pride to become what God created us to become**
-

Part IV: The Latter-day Saint Perspective

The Doctrine of Exaltation

LDS theology teaches that humans can become like God—not by ceasing to be creatures, but by progressing eternally through grace and covenant.

Key Concepts:

1. **We are literally God's spirit children**
 - Not just created beings, but offspring with divine potential
 - We have a divine nature inherent from our Heavenly Parents
2. **Mortality is a necessary step in eternal progression**
 - We came to earth to gain bodies, experience, and agency
 - We're being tested and refined

3. **Through Christ's atonement and temple covenants, we can be exalted**

- Exaltation means becoming like God
- It requires faith, repentance, ordinances, and enduring to the end

4. **Exaltation is becoming gods (lowercase), not God (uppercase)**

- We worship God the Father and Jesus Christ forever
- We become like Them, but remain Their children
- There is a hierarchy: They are our Gods; we become gods under Them

LDS Scriptures on Exaltation

Doctrine & Covenants 132:19-20: > “And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood... **they shall be gods**, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, **because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.**”

Key Points: - Through temple marriage (sealing) - Sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise - **They shall be gods** - They have all power - Angels are subject to them

Doctrine & Covenants 76:58-59 (Celestial Glory): > “Wherefore, as it is written, they are gods, even the sons of God— Wherefore, **all things are theirs**, whether life or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's.”

Key Points: - “They are gods, even the sons of God” - All things are theirs - They belong to Christ; Christ belongs to God (hierarchy maintained)

Doctrine & Covenants 84:33-38 (Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood): > “For whoso is faithful unto the obtaining these two priesthoods of which I have spoken, and the magnifying their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their bodies. They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and **the elect of God**. And also all they who receive this priesthood receive me, saith the Lord; For he that receiveth my servants receiveth me; And he that receiveth me receiveth my Father; **And he that receiveth my Father receiveth my Father's kingdom; therefore all that my Father hath shall be given unto him.** And this is according to the oath and covenant which belongeth to the priesthood.”

Key Points: - Faithful priesthood holders are sanctified - They become the elect of God - **All that the Father has shall be given unto him** - This is an oath and covenant from God

Doctrine & Covenants 132:37: > “Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other

things than that which they were commanded, **they have entered into their exaltation**, according to the promises, and **sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.**”

Key Points: - Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have entered their exaltation - They sit upon thrones - **They are not angels but are gods**

Abraham 3:22-23, 25-26 (Book of Abraham): > “Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones; And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: **These I will make my rulers**; for he stood among those that were spirits, and he saw that they were good; and he said unto me: Abraham, thou art one of them; thou wast chosen before thou wast born... And they who **keep their first estate** shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who **keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever.**”

Key Points: - Pre-mortal existence (“intelligences that were organized before the world was”) - Some were “noble and great ones” - God said “These I will make my rulers” - Those who keep their second estate (mortality) **shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever**

The King Follett Discourse (1844)

Joseph Smith’s most explicit teaching on exaltation:

“Here, then, is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God; and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one; **from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation**, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power.”

Key Concepts: - Eternal life is to **know God and learn to be Gods yourselves - The same as all Gods have done before you** (God Himself progressed) - **From grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation** (eternal progression) - Through resurrection and divine power

“God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret... **I am going to tell you how God came to be God. We have imagined and supposed that God was God from all eternity. I will refute that idea, and take away the veil, so that you may see.** It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the character of God, and to know that we may converse with him as one man converses with another, and that **he was once a man like us; yea, that God himself, the Father of us all, dwelt on an earth, the same as Jesus Christ himself did.**”

Key Concepts: - God the Father was once a man - He progressed to become God - He dwelt on an earth as we do - Jesus Christ followed the same pattern

The As Man Is, God Once Was Couplet

Lorenzo Snow (5th LDS Prophet): > “As man now is, God once was: > As God now is, man may be.”

This summarizes LDS theology: 1. God the Father was once mortal like us 2. He progressed to exaltation/godhood 3. We can follow the same path through Christ

Book of Mormon Support

Mosiah 3:19: > “For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless **he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord**, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.”

Key Point: We must “put off the natural man” and become saints through Christ’s atonement.

3 Nephi 12:48 (Sermon on the Mount in the Book of Mormon): > “Therefore I would that ye should **be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect.**”

Key Point: Christ commands us to be perfect as He and the Father are perfect.

3 Nephi 27:27: > “Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, **even as I am.**”

Key Point: We should become like Christ—“even as I am.”

Moroni 7:48: > “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, **pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love**, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; **that ye may become the sons of God**; that **when he shall appear we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.”

Key Points: - Pray to be filled with divine love - **That ye may become the sons of God** - **When he shall appear we shall be like him** - **We may be purified even as he is pure**

Part V: Comparison of Views

Aspect	Protestant View	LDS View
Human nature	Created beings, forever distinct from God	Spirit children of God, with divine potential
“Image of God”	Moral/spiritual attributes only	Literal image—physical and spiritual resemblance
“Partakers of divine nature”	Receive divine help for holy living	Genuinely share in God’s nature by grace
“Joint heirs with Christ”	Inherit blessings, not divinity	Share equally in Christ’s inheritance, including glorification
Final state	Glorified creatures in heaven, forever subordinate	Exalted to godhood, ruling with Christ
God’s nature	Absolutely transcendent, wholly other	Exalted man, our literal Father
Progression	Sanctification in this life, perfection in the next	Eternal progression from grace to grace
Biblical support	Reinterprets texts metaphorically	Takes texts at face value

Part VI: Addressing the Real Question

Are We Just God’s Pets?

The Protestant View Can Imply:

- Humans are creatures, like angels or animals
- We worship and serve God, but never truly become like Him
- The gap between Creator and creature is eternal and unbridgeable
- We’re more like beloved pets than true children

The Biblical and LDS View:

- Humans are God’s **children**, not just creatures
- Children grow up to become like their parents
- God’s plan is to **make us like Him**—not keep us as subordinates
- We’re **joint heirs with Christ**, not servants

The Question:

Would you raise your own children to remain children forever, never growing to adulthood? Or is the goal for them to mature, become independent, and start families of their own?

If earthly parents want their children to become fully mature adults, why wouldn't our Heavenly Father want the same for us—to become like Him?

Conclusion

What the Bible Clearly Teaches

1. **We are made in God's image and likeness** (Genesis 1:26-27)
2. **We are God's children, not just creatures** (Romans 8:14-17)
3. **We are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ** (Romans 8:17)
4. **We will be glorified together with Christ** (Romans 8:17)
5. **We are partakers of the divine nature** (2 Peter 1:4)
6. **We will be like Him** (1 John 3:2)
7. **Jesus called humans "gods" based on Scripture** (John 10:34-36, Psalm 82:6)
8. **We are being transformed into Christ's image from glory to glory** (2 Corinthians 3:18)
9. **We will judge angels and rule with Christ** (1 Corinthians 6:2-3, Revelation 3:21)
10. **Christ commands us to be perfect as the Father is perfect** (Matthew 5:48)

What the Early Church Taught

For over 1,000 years, mainstream Christianity taught theosis/deification: - Irenaeus: "at length gods" - Athanasius: "He became man that we might become god" - Augustine: "He that justifies also deifies"

This wasn't heresy—it was orthodoxy.

The LDS Claim

Latter-day Saints teach that: - Joseph Smith **restored** this ancient doctrine - God is an exalted man; we can become like Him - Through Christ's atonement and temple covenants, we can be exalted - Exaltation means becoming gods, ruling with Christ, and continuing to progress eternally

The Challenge to Protestants

If the Bible teaches that: - We're God's children (not just creatures) - We're joint heirs with Christ - We're partakers of the divine nature - We will be like Christ - We will be glorified with Him - We will rule and judge with divine authority

Then what exactly is wrong with saying we can "become like God"?

Aren't Latter-day Saints simply taking the Bible seriously, while Protestants are reinterpreting these verses to fit later philosophical creeds?

The ultimate question isn't whether the doctrine sounds too good to be true.

The question is: What does the Bible actually say?

And can we trust that God's plan for His children is greater than we imagined?