Teachings Concerning
The Divine Potential of Man

Man, The Offspring of God

**Lorenzo Snow**
Our spirit birth gave us godlike capabilities. We were born in the image of God our Father; He begot us like unto Himself. There is the nature of deity in the composition of our spiritual organization; in our spiritual birth our Father transmitted to us the capabilities, powers and faculties which He Himself possessed -- as much so as the child on its mother's bosom possesses, although in an undeveloped state, the faculties, powers, and susceptibilities of its parent. *(Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p.4)*

**First Presidency Message: Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, Anthon H. Lund**
Man is the child of God, formed in the divine image and endowed with divine attributes, and even as the infant son of an earthly father and mother is capable in due time of becoming a man, so the undeveloped offspring of celestial parentage is capable, by experience through ages and aeons, of evolving into a God. *(Messages of the First Presidency, 4:206)*

**Joseph Fielding Smith**
We believe in the dignity and divine origin of man. Our faith is founded on the fact that God is our Father, and that we are his children, and that all men are brothers and sisters in the same eternal family.

As members of his family, we dwelt with him before the foundations of this earth were laid, and he ordained and established the plan of salvation whereby we gained the privilege of advancing and progressing as we are endeavoring to do.

The God we worship is a glorified Being in whom all power and perfection dwell, and he has created man in his own image and likeness, with those characteristics and attributes which he himself possesses. *(Conference Report, April 1970, p.4)*

**Spencer W. Kimball**
If we are true and faithful, we shall rise, not alone in immortality but unto eternal life. Immortality is to live forever in an assigned kingdom. Eternal life is to gain exaltation in the highest heaven and live in the family unit. *(Conference Report, Oct. 1978, p. 109; or Ensign, Nov. 1978, p. 72)*

**Marion G. Romney**
Immortality connotes life without end. Eternal life, on the other hand, connotes quality of life--exaltation, the highest type of immortality, the kind of life enjoyed by God himself. . . . The crowning work and glory of God is, therefore, as he has said, to bring to pass the eternal life of man. Such is the worth of a soul. Surely it “is great in the sight of God” *(D&C 18:10).* They should be of like value in the sight of men. As God’s work and glory is to bring to pass the eternal life of man, so the desire, hope, and work of every man should be to obtain eternal life for himself. And not for himself only but also for his fellowmen; and it will be when he fully appreciates who and what he is--his nature, origin, destiny, and potentiality. In comparison to eternal life, all else sinks into insignificance. For, as Jesus said: “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” *(Mark 8:36-37.)* *(Conference Report, Oct. 1978, p. 19; or Ensign, Nov. 1978, p.14-15)*

**Bruce R. McConkie**
Since it is the prophetic purpose to lead men to full salvation in the highest heaven of the celestial world, when they speak and write about salvation, almost without exception, they mean eternal life or exaltation. They use the terms salvation, exaltation, and eternal life as synonyms, as words that mean exactly the same thing without any difference, distinction, or variance whatever. *(The Promised Messiah, pp.129-130)*

**God’s Work and Glory**

**Moses 1:39**
For behold, this is my work and my glory--to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

**Achieving Godhood: The Purpose of the Gospel**
Gordon B. Hinkley

The whole design of the gospel is to lead us, onward and upward to greater achievement, even, eventually, to godhood. This great possibility was enunciated by the Prophet Joseph Smith in the King Follet sermon (see Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 342-62) and emphasized by President Lorenzo Snow. It is a grand and incomparable concept: As God now is, man may become! (See The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, comp. Clyde J. Williams, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1984, p. 1) [From October 1994 General Conference, Ensign, November 1994, p. 48; also Teachings of Gordon B. Hinkley, 179].

Brigham Young

The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like himself; when we have been proved in our present capacity, and have been faithful with all things he puts into our possession. (Discourses of Brigham Young, p.57)

The Prophets on Man’s Potential for Godhood

Joseph Smith

• God himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens! That is the great secret. If the veil were rent today, and the great God who holds this world in its orbit, and who upholds all worlds and all things by his power, was to make himself visible, – I say, if you were to see him today, you would see him like a man in form – like yourselves in all the person, image, and very form as a man; for Adam was created in the very fashion, image and likeness of God, and received instruction from, and walked, talked and conversed with him, as one man talks and communes with another. . . . 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. And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.345-346)

• The first principles of man are self-existent with God. God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. The relationship we have with God places us in a situation to advance in knowledge. He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits. (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p.354)

Brigham Young

• Intelligent beings are organized to become Gods, even the Sons of God, to dwell in the presence of the Gods, and become associated with the highest intelligences that dwell in eternity. (Discourses of Brigham Young, p.245)

• (Mankind) is brought together, organized, and capacitated to receive knowledge and intelligence, to be enthroned in glory, to be made angels, Gods -- beings who will hold control over the elements, and have power by their word to command the creation and redemption of worlds, or to extinguish suns by their breath, and disorganize worlds, hurling them back into their chaotic state. This is what you and I are created for. (Discourses of Brigham Young, p.48)

• The Lord created you and me for the purpose of becoming Gods like Himself; when we have been proved in our present capacity, and been faithful with all things He puts into our possession. We are created, we are born for the express purpose of growing up from the low estate of manhood, to become Gods like unto our Father in heaven. That is the truth about it, just as it is. The Lord has organized mankind for the express purpose of increasing in that intelligence and truth, which is with God, until he is capable of creating worlds on worlds, and becoming Gods, even the sons of God. (Journal of Discourses, Vol.3, p.93)

John Taylor

• A man, as a man, could arrive at all the dignity that a man was capable of obtaining or receiving; but it needed a God to raise him to the dignity of a God. For this cause it is written, “Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him.” And how and why like Him? Because, through the instrumentality of the atonement and the
adoption, it is made possible for us to become of the family of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; and that as He, the potential instrument, through the oneness that existed between Him and His Father, by reason of obedience to divine law, overcame death, hell and the grave, and sat down upon His Father’s throne, so shall we be able to sit down with Him, even upon His throne. (Mediation and Atonement, Ch.20)

- (Man) is not only the son of man, but he is the son of God also. He is a God in embryo, and possesses within him a spark of that eternal flame which was struck from the blaze of God’s eternal fire in the eternal world (The Gospel Kingdom, p.54)

Lorenzo Snow

Obedience and purity are requirements of godhood. That exalted position was made manifest to me at a very early day. I had a direct revelation of this. It was most perfect and complete. If there ever was a thing revealed to man perfectly, clearly, so that there could be no doubt or dubiety, this was revealed to me, and it came in these words: “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.” (Teachings of Lorenzo Snow, p.5)

Heber J. Grant

These duties and obligations are calculated to make us Godlike in our disposition. They are calculated to make Gods of us, and to fit and qualify us that we may become joint heirs with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. (Gospel Standards, p.38)

Joseph Fielding Smith

- Mortality is the testing or proving ground for exaltation to find out who among the children of God are worthy to become Gods themselves, and the Lord has informed us that “few there be that find it.” (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:69-70)
- This mortal probation was to be a brief period, just a short span linking the eternity past with the eternity future. Yet it was to be a period of tremendous importance. It would either give to those who received it the blessing of eternal life, which is the greatest gift of God, and thus qualify them for godhood as sons and daughters of our Eternal Father, or, if they rebelled and refused to comply with the laws and ordinances which were provided for their salvation, it would deny them the great gift and they would be assigned, after the resurrection, to some inferior sphere according to their works. (Doctrines of Salvation, 1:69)
- The purpose of this mortal life is to prepare us to become gods; even the sons and daughters of God. In the minds of many misguided people, this thought appears as blasphemy. For an elder of the Church to speak of the just becoming gods through obedience to the words and laws of the gospel stirs their souls to bitterness and anger. Yet this is one of the plainest of all the teachings in the Bible. The real intent of mortality is that we might, through the trials, tribulations and blessings of the mortal life, come back into the presence of our Eternal Father and his Son Jesus Christ, to share all the blessings of a glorious exaltation. (Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol.2, p.x)

Spencer W. Kimball

Mortal man has not become what he may become. Perhaps there is something else that we will learn as we perfect our bodies and our spirits in the times to come. You and I – what helpless creatures are we! Such limited power we have, and how little can we control the wind and the waves and the storms! We remember the numerous scriptures which, concentrated in a single line, were stated by a former prophet, Lorenzo Snow: “As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be.”

This is a power available to us as we reach perfection and receive the experience and power to create, to organize, to control native elements. How limited we are now! We have no power to force the grass to grow, the plants to emerge, the seeds to develop. (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, p.26)

Ezra Taft Benson

As God’s offspring, we have His attributes in us. We are gods in embryo, and thus have an unlimited potential for progress and attainment. (Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, p.21)