

Kingdom Progression – Part 2

Welcome to Kingdom Progression, Part 2, January 30, 2008. The last time that we met I gave an introduction for this new series called Kingdom Progression. I spent that time in large part talking about how I use posters so that people will not over-interpret the tool that I call my posters. Today we're going to enter the sequence of posters that depicts our kingdom progression in various stages. Where should we begin? As always, in the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth. We're going to begin in the Garden of Eden with Adam the first man and thus the beginning of the human race.

The first poster is Adam pre-fall. Recall that I'm not depicting material man on this sequence of posters since we all understand that. Also I'm not depicting emotion on these posters. We understand that. Emotion is part of immaterial man; but trying to depict material man and emotion on the posters would add complexity without adding clarity of the points that I'm heading toward making. Genesis 2:7 in the New American Standard says – then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground. That, of course, is material man. Material man is made from material stuff. But the verse continues...and the Lord God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being. In the King James Version, man became a living soul. Thus, the world soul in the KJV is used for immaterial man; but as I'll point out as we move along, we do not need to get hung up on what word is used at that point. At this stage, Adam pre-fall, the entirety of man is innocent before God. I've chosen to depict that on this poster by using the color green to draw everything about Adam. At this point, also note that all of immaterial man is functioning as a homogenous entity in this stage. There's no critical point here in insisting on using multiple words to describe immaterial man since all of immaterial man is functioning as one entity. The choice of the King James Version to use soul and the choice of later versions to use being is not a critical distinction here. So let's not miss the critical points by debating the noncritical points.

Here are the key points. Man is material and immaterial. Man matters only because man is more than matter. The immaterial man is homogenous, functioning as a unit. All of man is innocent. Without the immaterial man, the material man is not living. That is to say, has no life, not even physical life. Immaterial man is also said to be alive in a different sense, meaning in a spiritual sense. Immaterial man is alive to God. Thus, in this stage, immaterial man has unfettered communion with God; although immaterial man is not indwelt by God. In his innocence, man has no guilt; thus, he has no conscience since no conscience is needed, when there is total innocence. Thus innocent man has no guilt, no conviction, no condemnation, no shame, and no fear. He needs no covering because he is totally righteous and has nothing to hide. No lies are needed because lying is simply a word we use that denotes hiding. He has no sin nature. All of his desires flow from his communion with God. In this stage, there is no curse; there is no toil. The whole planet is paradise. Nothing is carnivorous. There is no fighting over authority. There's no fighting among creatures either among men or animals. There's no fighting between man and woman. There's no fighting between man and God. There is no sin to fight. No change is needed because none is called for because everything at this stage is perfection. Thus, this is paradise on Earth. Even at this early stage in our journey, I've begun to introduce the word and concept of spirit. This is to begin taking NT revelation and introducing it here so that we're less bothered when a change in terminology occurs later on in Scripture. Remember the

old saying: The new is in the old contained; and the old is in the new explained. The new is in the old concealed; and the old is in the new revealed. So when we're given two revelations, one OT and one NT of the OT, the NT revelation is to progress and is clearer revelation. I am using the word soul here to connote mind, emotion, and will. As I bring soul down into the diagram, I show it as only will and mind. I do that because will and mind are the critical determinates as we go through our kingdom progression. Soul is used here, at least in the KJV. Man became a living soul when God breathed into him. That's because the concept of spirit, as I'm going to use it, I regard as part of the progressive revelation of the New Testament. Here soul, in the KJV, is the word used for immaterial man, all of immaterial man, and immaterial man that gives life to material man.

However, in the NT, the more precise revelation of spirit is given as performing these functions including giving life to the physical body. That's true for both the KJ and the NAS. In both versions, James 2:26 says – the body without the spirit is dead. In Luke 8:49 telling the story of Jairus with the sick daughter, Jairus is told your daughter has died. A few verses later, Jesus says in verses 54 and 55 Child arise. And then Scripture gives the distinction between the child who is dead and the child who arises. It says – and her spirit returned and she sat up. Observe this diagram carefully for it all to sink in for everything is going to change dramatically. The change that's soon to occur in Adam is not subtle. The change that's going to occur is not even what I would call substantial. The change that's about to occur is overwhelming. Genesis 2:17, God gives the prohibition that you all know – But from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat for in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die; followed quickly by the behavior of Eve in Genesis 3:6. She took from its fruit and ate and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate. So man was given one prohibition. That meant that man was given will with which to make a choice. He was given a choice and had two options. One, do not eat, which means to obey God, which means to continue living, which means remaining innocent before your God, which is to remain God determined in every way. Or eat—which is to disobey God, which is to die, which is to take on guilt before God, which is to be self determined rather than God determined.

So man immediately, when given that choice, and receiving the temptation from Satan, self determined to be self determined. He declared himself to be his own god. He declared himself as the judge of God. He got to choose. He was given will as part of being made in the image of God because God has will. He is made in the image of God; but he is not God. He is not sovereign. So man gets will with which to choose and is given a choice that the relationship may be of love; but he does not get to will the options and does not get to will the consequences.

Next poster. The next poster depicts the next step in kingdom progression. This is to understand Adam post-fall and this is critical for us because Adam post-fall equals us pre-salvation. Notice that the green color is gone. This is because innocence is gone. Notice that the spirit is now dead to God whereas before it was alive to God. The spirit has not ceased to exist. I have depicted its deadness by drawing it as small and totally dark. The spirit still exists because it still allows material man to be physically alive. God in His sovereignty can still function through the spirit of man because deadness does not restrict a sovereign God. So there are places in the OT which mentions God speaking into a spirit or working through a spirit or whatever. A sovereign God still has dominion over everything including death in any form. Notice that the soul is also

dead to God; its innocence is gone. The key part in understanding man from this moment on is to understand that he has become fully alive to self. In fact, man has used his will to declare himself as being self determined. He has put self on the throne. And I'm sure you've seen this depiction before that when you put self on the throne, it spells flesh. F-l-e-s-h with the "h" being the throne on which self is sitting. It's a simple diagrammatic way of indicating the change that has occurred in man. He has declared himself as his own god. When you have self on the throne, this is what is meant in the NT as it talks about spiritual flesh as opposed to physical flesh which you can reach out and pinch, that which is material man. When it says in the NT, flesh versus spirit, it's not speaking of the meat that's on your arm. It's speaking of self on the throne. This is in fact the best way of diagrammatically representing the sin nature. Notice in this, Adam post-fall, that all the desires of man flow out of self on the throne, whereas, previously all the desires of man in the pre-fall state of innocence flowed out of the spirit that was alive to God. Notice that the will post-fall does not get to choose between God and self. The will now has choices that flow only out of self on the throne. Notice the will can only access the rest of the mind by passing through the frame of reference of self on the throne. Notice, therefore, that the will of man is not free. Man in his self determination declares this state to be free will. But the will, in fact, is in total bondage. The will is in slavery to self on the throne. Man has declared himself to be his own god. Man likes this and he knows that he likes this. He doesn't want to change because the change would mean that he would have to take self off the throne. He does not want anything to rule him nor to overrule him. He enjoys autonomy. He fallaciously believes that he could change if he wanted to change. What he does not know is that he cannot change. He is totally depraved. He is insane because he is divorced from reality. Remember the definition of truth. Truth is what God is and how God views everything else. So truth is how God views reality, not how man in self determination views reality. Sanity is thinking according to reality. Insanity is being divorced from reality. So man at this stage is incapable of thinking according to reality because reality is what God thinks it is. And man is incapable of thinking according to how God views reality; thus, man is insane. Proverbs 1:31 says – so they shall eat of the fruit of their own way. Man wanted autonomy, he chose autonomy, and he got it because God gave him the desire of his heart. But he also got the fruit of autonomy which is insanity, which is divorced from the reality.

Man got to choose; but he did not get to choose the consequences. So notice at the bottom, I put these summary statements. Man, in his post-fall condition, is dead to God, functioning with self on the throne, declaring himself as his own god, which after all was the temptation offered by Satan—if you eat of that, you will be like God—meaning be your own god. He does not want to change and he knows this although he may not fully admit that. What he does not know is, I cannot change, still believing that he could if he chose to because he regards himself as having free will. Notice that all of man is dead to God. Immaterial man is functioning as a homogenous unit. So there is little reason to have two words to describe immaterial man which is functioning as a homogenous unit. At this point using soul or spirit is sufficient since all of immaterial man is dead to God and all is functioning as a homogenous unit. So before the fall, one word was sufficient to describe immaterial man because homogeneity was present. The homogeneity in the pre-fall condition was being God determined in all things; thus, totally innocent, fully alive to God with desires flowing from God. After the fall, one word is sufficient because homogeneity is present; but the homogeneity is totally different. This homogeneity in the post-fall condition is

self determination in all things, deadness to God in all things, guilty in all things with desires flowing from self and not flowing from God. Innocence is gone; but other things have come.

The sin nature of self on the throne has come. Depravity has come. Guilt before God has come. The conscience has come. Man now has conviction, condemnation, shame, and fear. He now has something to hide and has something to hide from. He makes himself a covering of leaves in his attempt to hide his material self. He hides from God or thinks that he can as he's divorced from reality. When found, he tries to hide by lying because all lies are simply a form of hiding. He tries to hide by shifting responsibility—the woman that You gave me caused me to eat. In trying to avoid accountability, he is pretending not to know what he has done. All of these behaviors flow out of self on the throne which is the sin nature. This sin nature is not irrelevant and is not simply something poetic from the past. This sin nature has been inherited by every man since which includes all men except Jesus. Thus, all of Adam's avoidance maneuvers are still applied by every human being in the post-fall state pre-salvation.

Man gets to choose; but he didn't get to choose the consequences. His undemanding work is now labor and toil. Because of him the planet is now cursed. The second law of thermodynamics now enters the physical realm where everything progressively deteriorates. Thorns and thistles enter. Carnivorous creatures will later be introduced. The peace of Earth is gone and it has become a raging planet. The peace on Earth is gone. Man must fight with animals. Man must fight sin. Man must fight consequences of sin. Man must fight all other men because all other men also have self on the throne and that obligatorily leads to conflict. Man must fight with woman over authority in relationship. Peace with God is gone. Self on the throne is the root of the flesh and the flesh is hostile toward God because self on the throne and God on the throne cannot coexist. To help this concept sink in, let's explore the concept of the depravity of man. This is critical because this poster of post-fall Adam is also us pre-salvation and also is everyone else who remains unsaved even today. The depravity of man is throughout Scripture; but if there's one concept in Scripture that is foreign to modern man, it is this one. Modern man thinks that man can raise himself up through his own efforts if he's only given a proper environment.

Next poster. I've chosen certain points to express the depravity of man. The first is Adam and Eve. The story is told in Genesis 3:5-13. To recount, Adam and Eve self determined that they were capable of self determining that they should be self determined; and thus, their own gods. That is the origin of sin and has been the origin of sin since that moment. This is the root of depravity. Secondly, their first born named Cain self determined in Genesis chapter four what an appropriate sacrifice should be to God. He became angry when God rejected his sacrifice. So Cain thought that he should be able to declare with what sacrifice God should be satisfied with. Cain could not kill God; but he killed the one whom God approved meaning his brother Abel who gave a sacrifice that God did accept. Cain, remember, was the first child born with a sin nature. Cain immediately, overtly exhibited it to the fullest and in fact revealed the methodology of Satan from then on. Recall Satan spoke the temptation to Adam and Eve that stimulated them to consider disobeying God and choosing self determination. Like Cain, but revealed by Cain, Satan cannot kill God. But he tries to kill everything that God desires, that God favors, and that God wills. And that's why we're told in the NT that he comes only to steal, kill, and destroy. Everything that God wills and favors and desires, Satan's methodology is to try to kill it. And

Cain is the revelation of that. Pre-flood man is described in Genesis 6:5 – Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the Earth. How great was the wickedness of man on the Earth? God saw that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. That summary sentence gives a definition of depravity beyond what I could do. This is self on the throne. When self is on the throne, every intent of the thoughts of the heart was only evil continually. Now this is all in the first six chapters of the Word of God. The temptation for us as so called modern man is to think that this applies only to primitive man.

So let us look at the last few chapters of the Word of God which is describing the future. In Revelation 16:21 toward the end of the Great Tribulation, it says – and huge hail stones about 100 pounds each came down from Heaven upon men and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail because the plague was extremely severe. Here is man knowing that the hail stones are coming from God. But what flows from man? What flows is blasphemy toward God instead of repentance toward God. Now recall that the judgments of God in the book of Revelation follow the sequence of seven seals, seven trumpets, followed by seven bowls. That verse that I just read is part of the seventh bowl; thus, toward the end of the judgments that flow from God. Yet at that point man is still hostile to God, unrepentant before God, and blaspheming God because of the judgment of God. That is implacable depravity revealed.

Next is the post-millennial condition. In Revelation 20:7-9 after the tribulation period, Jesus Christ returns to Earth to rule. So let's remind ourselves of what that rule will be like. This is the millennial kingdom. He rules with perfect righteousness and perfect holiness before the whole world, to demonstrate what righteousness and holiness looks like on planet Earth. Satan is penned up in captivity for that entire thousand year period so that he cannot exert a single corrupting influence upon humanity. At the end of that thousand year period, Satan is released. So what do you think man would do since man regarded by modern man is really intrinsically good and just needs a good environment in order to become complete goodness? After that thousand year period of righteous and holy rule by the Son of God Himself, with no satanic influence, when Satan is released, Scripture tells us that those who joined the revolt of Satan against the rule of Jesus Christ is like the sand of the seashore. In other words, innumerable. Can you imagine the depravity involved in having exposure to perfect righteousness and perfect holiness and no satanic influence for a thousand years and your reaction as soon as you're given the option is to rebel against God? That's depravity. And that alone from the Word of God, for those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God is irrefutable evidence that improving man's environment is not a solution to man's depravity.

Next is hell and by hell here, I'm not referring to the eternal lake of fire; I'm talking about the hell that's described by Jesus in Luke 16:19-31. The story that Jesus told of the poor man Lazarus who had the sores licked by the dogs and is now in Abraham's bosom, the paradise section, if you will of the after life. And there was a rich man who mistreated Lazarus, had no concern for him and was now in the torment section. That's the story that I'm referring to and it is told by Jesus Himself. The rich man, recall, in observing what was going on in paradise asked for someone to be sent to bring water. Why? To relieve his suffering. But he spoke not one word of repentance of anything he had done that placed him in this position to receive the judgment of God. So this continued unrepentance even in that state of torture in the after life. The summary verse in Romans 3:10-12 basically saying that none does good and none seeks

God. This is a NT restatement of an OT Scripture. So it is old and new. And it says – as it is written there is none righteous, not even one. There is none who understands; there is none who seeks for God. All have turned aside, together they have become useless. There is none who does good, not even one. Man chose self determination, that is self on the throne and that is the sin nature that every human since Adam has been born with it. That should help us to understand other Scriptures. Judges 21:25 – Everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Proverbs 14:12 – There is a way which seems right to a man; but its end is the way of death. Isaiah 53:6 – All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way. Taken together, all that should make it easy to understand Isaiah 64:6 where it says – and all our righteous deeds are like filthy rags. Not all of our unrighteous deeds; but all of what we would regard as righteous deeds are as filthy rags before a holy God. The best that man has to offer is totally poisoned and contaminated by self determination. Man is simply depraved. We need to fully absorb that; that poster particularly that depicts Adam pre-fall and then the post-fall comparison because that is us pre-salvation. Ephesians 2:1-3 summarizes that condition – we were dead in trespasses and sin. We lived in the lusts of our flesh; indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath. Thankfully we know verse four continues with “but God.” That poster of Adam post-fall reveals the total depravity of man. It is the state of every man until salvation comes through Jesus Christ. Now unsaved man totally rejects that notion. Unsaved man either sees himself as good or as able to become good. He is incapable of seeing himself as depraved, as a child of wrath, and destined for Hell. He cannot save himself. He must have divine light and divine life. As earthen vessels, we bring divine light through the Word of God and through transformed lives. Only God can impart divine life and we’ll take that up later when I speak, addressing that “but God” of Ephesians 2:4. When I get to that point I’ll present a schematic representation of the changes that occur as God imparts divine life to take us from the post-fall condition with the total depravity of man into being a born again child of God through the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now in the mean time, as I conclude today, there are three strong reasons for us to meditate on, to contemplate and to absorb the total depravity of man as revealed today by Adam in the post-fall condition.

First is to magnify our illumination of the grace of God for us; because even as born again Christians, we have a tendency to think that we just need a little oomph from God to help us get just across the finish line because we were almost there on our own good merits. You will not have a revelation of the amazing grace of God until you have a revelation of the total depravity that you had before “but God” intervened.

Secondly, to clarify our understanding and tolerance of the lost with whom we come in contact. Even in our criminal systems, people are not held accountable when they’re insane. Before a holy God man is accountable on multiple levels that we’ll address later on. But we should have more tolerance when we understand his condition as he’s functioning by nature as a child of wrath with self on the throne, hostile to God, thinking he has free will and he’s basically good.

Thirdly, it will teach us the utter folly of trying to complete in the flesh that which was begun by the Spirit as we continue in our kingdom progression to work out our salvation. Why is it total folly? Because the root of the flesh is self determination with self on the throne which is the sin nature; and that is depraved. And that is the problem. It is never part of any solution. It was not

part of any solution for our salvation and it will not be any part of any solution for our sanctification.

So for those three reasons, meditate on the total depravity of man before we come together next week. And the next time that we come together, I'll address us, post-salvation, as babes in Christ.

So thank you for listening.