

Kingdom Progression – Part 5

Welcome to continuation of the series Kingdom Progression. Today is session 5, March 5, 2008. We went through the introduction and then looked at Adam, and then our status as babes in Christ, and then the double-minded state. And today we'll take up the eternal state followed with unattainable perfection while here on Earth.

Next poster. We'll whip through these posters just by way of quick review. Remember, Adam pre-fall, was totally innocent with the desires coming from God; he was God determined. He had no change needed because he was totally innocent before his God. And then the dark exchange took place. On the next poster we looked at Adam post-fall where Adam made the determination that he was self determined; that he could declare better than God could what was in his best long-term interest. When he took up that flag, if you will, of declaring himself to be independent of God, making his own decisions; at that moment the fulfillment of what God spoke in the day that you eat of this fruit you will surely die. So on that day, the spirit died. That's why it's shown as small and dark. The sin nature was created. Adam had declared that self was on the throne. He was a self determined creature and gave up being God determined. At that moment he declared that he was his own god. From that moment on man has not wanted to change and man knows that he doesn't want to change. He knows that he likes making his own decisions, calling the shots, being his own god. He doesn't mind acknowledging God so long as not too much is required and in reality he remains on the throne himself. He's dead to God, alive to self which is the sin nature which is self on the throne which is the root of the flesh. What he does not know at that stage in his depravity is he cannot change. That is the unknown to him. He presumes that he could become anything he chose to be; but in reality he cannot. He is dead, separated from God; although of course, a sovereign God can override anything. There is no limitation to a sovereign God. So God can speak to man in spite of the spiritual deadness of man.

Then we have the divine exchange where we are saved. But after we're saved, we're what's called babes in Christ. We're now new creatures. We are blood-bought from that moment on we have eternity future settled; we will be with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The sin nature still remains. We still try to accomplish things through the flesh, not knowing that there's another pathway now into the spirit to access the mind of man. At that stage the babe in Christ thinks that I will change automatically into what the bible says will occur. After a period of time with some maturity, we reach the state that I call double-mindedness. We have the same pathways available; still in large part the pathway into the spirit to access the mind has been largely unused; hence it's shown as a broken line. You see that the solid black lines from the will into the self on the throne and into the mind are now even broader and darker than they were; because we have reached the point of saying change is not occurring, but I will make change occur. And by trying to do that we turn to flesh (self on the throne) to try to accomplish the purposes of God. But self can never control self; self can never improve self. Hence we have Paul as he wrote at the end of Romans 7, oh wretched man that I am. The things that I want to do I don't do. The things I don't want to do, I do. And that's the state of double-mindedness which may seem tragic and wretched. It is; but it is in fact improvement over the babe in Christ who thought that this would occur automatically. At least here he throws up his hands in frustration and says it's not happening, so what next?

Today we're going to move into the next stage called the eternal state. Now remember the sequence that I'm using. There are seven stages in this sequence of Kingdom Progression. We've covered the first four. The next step would be number five; but to have number five in proper focus, we need to not only know what comes up to it; but we need to know what is on the other side of it so that we can have it in perfect focus. In the Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (which is a secular book); one of the seven habits is to begin with the end in mind. So we're, therefore, going to the end, to the eternal state and then work backwards. So we're going here to the seventh and last stage which is us in the eternal state so that we have the end in mind. Now several things are noteworthy on this poster. Notice that the entire poster is in red. That means that everything about us in the eternal state is blood-bought. There is nothing there which is not blood-bought. Everything has been perfected. Everything that could not be perfected is now gone. You notice no blackness on this poster. Self determination is gone. Self on the throne is gone. The sin nature is, therefore, gone. And that being the root of the flesh; what the Bible calls flesh is now gone. They're not only gone, they're gone forever, never to return. There will be no backsliding in the eternal state. Desires flow from the spirit, from the mind of Christ which is in our spirit. Notice that whatever direction in the eternal state that the will may turn, it leads to the spirit. And the spirit is indwelled by the Holy Spirit. The mind is totally renewed. There is no access to any imperfection; so this is the perfection of the eternal state.

The sin nature is not there and not only is it not there, it is gone forever. Our minds are totally renewed to the mind of Christ. I John 3:2 tells us – when He appears, we shall be like Him because we shall see Him just as He is. Much of the time in our Christian walks, we spend trying to become like Jesus Christ instead of spending our time beholding Jesus Christ; because the clearer that we see Jesus Christ as He truly is, the more we will be transformed into His image. But that Scripture in the eternal state has now been completely fulfilled because we are seeing Him face-to-face as He is and not as we previously thought Him to be. II Corinthians 5:8 speaks of – absent from the body and present with the Lord. At the time of physical death, immaterial man in his entirety departs the material body and goes to the Lord. James 2:26 tells us that. The body without the spirit is dead. So the thing that marks physical death is the spirit departs. The body won't die until the spirit departs because the spirit is imparting life to the physical body. Recall that prior to salvation immaterial man was totally dead to God. Therefore soul or spirit could be used to refer to immaterial man because all of immaterial man was homogenous in its deadness to God. But after salvation the spirit was reborn unto God, alive to God. The spirit was the new creation, was the new man, was indwelled by the Holy Spirit, and was perfected. We're told that in Ephesians 4:24 where it tells us to put on the new man which has been created in righteousness and true holiness in the image of God. But I use the term soul to refer to mind, emotion, and will. The soul, after salvation, was not perfected. If it had been perfected, we would not have been told in Romans 12:2 to be transformed by the renewing of the mind. Because of that distinction of immaterial man after salvation having one part that is perfected and one part that is yet to be transformed, then at least two words are needed to describe immaterial man. I use the word soul to mean the mind that needs to be renewed and spirit to mean the new creation which has been perfected. One part of immaterial man was perfected; one part was yet to be transformed; thus, two words are needed.

But notice now in the eternal state, the mind has also been perfected; it has been renewed according to the mind of Christ. We are now like Him because we see Him as He is rather than through a glass dimly, through self on the throne, which was our status on Earth even after salvation. We saw dimly as per I Corinthians 13:12 because of self on the throne as the sin nature. But now in the eternal state, self on the throne is gone. The sin nature is gone. There's no drive towards sin, no magnetic pull toward sin. The log has been taken out of our spiritual eyes. We see clearly and totally so for the first time in our existence. And what we see clearly is Jesus Christ. Seeing Him clearly in all of His glory is what transforms us because we see Him as He is. So we are like Him because we see Him as He is, with an unclouded view, not as we previously thought Him to be in the dimness of our vision while still on Earth. This is the first time that we see fully how God views reality. How God views reality is our definition of truth; so truth has finally set us totally free. While on Earth, after salvation, we were positionally free in the sense that we're blameless before our Holy God because of the blood of Jesus Christ. But we were not functioning in freedom because we were still in large part functioning in the bondage to the sin nature and looking at things through self on the throne. Soul and spirit are now united in perfection. Thus, again, one word can suffice in referring to immaterial man in this, the eternal state; because there's not a part that's perfected and a part that yet to be transformed where you needed two words. Now everything in man is perfected and for that reason one word is sufficient. Revelation 6:9 – I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who have been slain. These are martyrs during the tribulation period. Revelation 20:4 – And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded. These Scriptures refer to immaterial man in the eternal state. Splitting soul and spirit is not critical since all of immaterial man is now united in perfection. Immaterial man, in the eternal state, contains nothing that wants to exalt self. It contains nothing that is anti-Christ. Therefore, in the eternal state, there's no sin nature, no drive to sin, thus, no sin, and if no sin, there is no conviction, no shame, no guilt, no condemnation, and no fear (using fear to mean dread and terror).

Recall the experience of Adam. As soon as he declared himself to be self determined, he received conviction. He had shame, he had fear, and he had something to hide and thought that he could hide from a sovereign, omnipotent, omnipresent God. But here in the eternal state for us, all our fears have been consolidated into one fear—namely the fear of the Lord, not meaning dread and terror, but fear of the Lord meaning awe and reverence. We are one with Jesus Christ in whole, not in part. Remember the definition of love as a passion for oneness. In the eternal state, love as a passion for oneness is fully and finally consummated with our Lord and Savior. There are no comparisons that we make with others. All eyes are on Jesus; because when you're beholding Jesus in the fullness of His glory, to where would you divert your eyes to observe something more magnificent? The question is phrased thus in Isaiah 46:5 – To whom would you compare Me? And we now experience the fulfillment of that Scripture and declare I will compare You with no one. I will compare You with no one because I now see You fully. What do we see fully? Recall where we started this series: The Holiness of God; the other thanness of God. So what we are seeing fully is the Holiness of God as manifest to us in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's when we joined the Heavenly scene singing joyfully and without reservation, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts as was described in Isaiah 6:3. And we sing holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty as we're told in Revelation 4:8. Is it any wonder that any created being including the elders of Revelation 4:10 simply take their crowns and throw them at His feet? Because what created being can hang onto something thinking that is

theirs when you're looking at the Holy God, Who in the beginning created the Heavens and the Earth? They are seeing Him as He is; and thus, nothing in them thinks that they have anything to hold and claim as their own. It is only His and if He wants to give it back, He will; but I'm not clinging to something as if it's mine. I have no possessiveness because for the first time I see that everything is the possession of this Holy God that I'm beholding. And only humility can exist in a created being who is seeing Him in that light. And that will be us in our eternal perfected state.

There'll be no immaturity as when we were babes in Christ. There'll be no double-mindedness as when we cried out oh wretched man that I am. There'll be no mind that needs to be yet transformed. The glorified body that will join our immaterial man at the rapture will make us complete in eternity future. But it will not perfect our immaterial selves; our immaterial selves are already perfected. That's why they're where they are. But after that we will be in what's called glory. It's glory because that's where God is including His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And we see His glory. And remember we gave a functional definition of glory as being His infinite, intrinsic, eternal perfections. And when you're looking at the infinite, intrinsic, eternal perfections of God Himself, you will cling to nothing as your own.

Next poster. Recall that we're going through a series of seven stages to understand Kingdom Progression. We began with Adam pre-fall, then Adam post-fall, then us post-salvation as babes in Christ, then us post-salvation as double-minded. Stage five is the missing link. Stage five, recall, cannot be fully understood unless we know what's on each side of it. For that reason, we went to the last stage which I've just finished—meaning us in the eternal state—stage seven. Now we're going to continue by looking at stage number six. This one also could not be understood except we look at stage seven and then come back to it. This poster that you see before you now is the mark that we press toward while on planet Earth as Christians after salvation. This stage is the upward call of God to grow into Christlikeness. This is the state of unattainable perfection while yet here on Earth. It's the stage that we press toward as we're told in Philippians 3:14. Since it is unattainable, we will always fall short of it. But falling short of it doesn't mean we don't aim for it. It still remains the mark that we aim for. The reason we do it is the following.

If I am heading north and I aim for Center Point, I am going no further than Center Point. I may fall short of Center Point; but if I'm aiming for Center Point, I'm not going beyond it. If I aim for Waterloo, I may fall short of Waterloo, but I am not going beyond Waterloo because that's what I'm aiming for. So if we do not aim for unattainable perfection, we will fall shorter of perfection than we would have fallen if we had aimed for it, you see. So we want to aim for that which is unattainable so that we progress as far as we can progress while still here on planet Earth. Recall that in the eternal state, the sin nature is gone. But while we're still on Earth as Christians, the sin nature remains. The sin nature is self on the throne which means functioning in self determination. So here we have two contrasts linked together but without impact of the flesh on the spirit in the stage of unattainable perfection. Notice that the spirit is exactly the same as it was in the eternal state. Notice that the will and the mind in the state of unattainable perfection are functioning totally according to the spirit. Notice that the will has only one method of functioning—that is to access the spirit, filled with the Holy Spirit, and containing the mind of Jesus Christ. The eternal state exists; but it exists side by side with the sin nature. They're side

by side, but in the stage of perfection, there would be no communication between the two. Since the sin nature cannot influence the soul and spirit, then all of immaterial man remains totally and completely God determined, not self determined. No self determination is allowed expression.

The sin nature is loculated. It is sealed off. It is totally controlled. The fruit of the Spirit called self control is totally and fully manifest in this state that we aim for called unattainable perfection. In short terms, this is Christlikeness. This is to fully bear the image of God while yet here on Earth. It is to be sinless. It is sinless perfection while still on Earth. This is to have the eternal state fully manifest while yet here on Earth in your carnal body. Since soul and spirit function as one, then only one term would be necessary and could therefore be soul or spirit. But we need to recall one item. I John 1:8 – If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. That verse alone would tell us that this state is unattainable. It is unattainable while here to a greater or lesser degree because we still see through a glass dimly always influenced to some degree by the sin nature of self on the throne. Only in the eternal state will we fully fulfill I John 3:2 and be totally like Jesus Christ by seeing Him as he is with no contamination and dimness of our vision.

But we're to begin that process of bringing Heaven to Earth by pressing toward this mark of unattainable perfection. That's to fulfill Philippians 3:12-13 to do this one thing, to forget what lies behind; we forget the stage of the babe in Christ. We forget the stage of double-mindedness and we press forward toward this mark of unattainable perfection. And that pressing toward that mark brings about its own transformation. That pressing toward that mark is what brings maximal glory to God, maximal pleasure to God, minimal grief to the Holy Spirit, maximal testimony to those around us that we're witnessing to, and maximal fulfillment of the abundant life for us. But if we do not press toward that mark with single mindedness, then we will not experience the fullness of the abundant life. We will not bring maximal testimony of Jesus Christ to planet Earth. We will not bring maximal pleasure and maximal glory to God Himself and we will bring more than minimal grief to the Holy Spirit. This pressing toward this mark, as Paul described, is what maximally bears the image of God and that's what we are called to do...to be image bearers of God. It's what maximally gives accurate testimony of Jesus Christ to planet Earth. This becomes our vision. If we understand the eternal state, we will understand what we are pressing toward as we focus our gaze upon the Lord Jesus Christ which is what we're told to do. Regarding Him as our source, regarding Him as the foundation of all, regarding Him as the rock on which we stand, regarding Him as the mark toward which we press, wanting to see nothing except Him, forgetting what lies behind. There is no condemnation from past sins. If you are focused on falling short, the temptation is to remain self focused on the shortness of your fall. It's simply one other way of remaining self focused and self determined. That's why the focus has to shift from self and the performance of self, evaluated by self, to a standard established by self, and change totally and completely into fixing your gaze upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because that's where you will be in the eternal state. And what we're to press toward is the eternal state while yet here on Earth. Albeit in the company of the persistent sin nature, which is still part of us, but not something that we focus on, you see. But since that it is there, and the man who says he has no sin deceives himself, the sin nature will always exert some influence, it will always contribute to dimness of our vision, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't with single minded focus fix our gaze upon what we will be in the eternal state as we see the Lord Jesus Christ face-to-face instead of just quoting verses about Him.

That becomes our vision. Proverbs 29:18 (in the KJV) says – without a vision, the people perish. So this vision of seeing ourselves in the eternal state, seeing the Lord Jesus Christ as He is becomes the mark toward which we press, thus the stage called unattainable perfection while here on Earth. And if you're not doing that, then you will respond to the downward spiral of remaining self determined with self on the throne.

So that's the upward call of God in Christ Jesus that saves you from the downward spiral of life in the flesh while pronouncing it as holy. But how do we do that? Well that's the subject of the one stage yet to be discussed—namely stage number five out of the sequence of seven. And since that is the critical stage, that is the stage that we'll begin to take up the next time that we come together, which for us unless something changes, will be March 19, 2008. And we're going to take that up and look at it in stages so that we don't miss any detail of what it is and how to function on it.

So my time today is a little more than up and I thank you for your patience in listening.