

# The Down Path

The Path to Leadership as Service

# Spiritual Leadership

- Bible is the defining standard
  - Culture influences leadership behavior
  - Culture should not determine leadership behavior
- Spiritual Laws govern spiritual behavior
  - Casual observer will likely question these principles
  - Why go down when it seems natural to go up?

# Metaphors

The Mountain of the Lord (Is 14; Ez 28)

The Up Path

The Down Path

# Up the Down Path I

13 For you have said in your heart:  
‘I will ascend into heaven,  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;  
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation  
On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,  
I will be like the Most High.’

*The New King James Version*. 1982 (Is 14:12–14). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

# The Ascendant Model

- Egocentric upward focus
  - revealed in the use of the first person singular by the speaker, Lucifer (vs. 12).
- Goals are not authorized
  - Not ordained to such lofty achievements
- Covets a position and a role to which he was never called
- Lucifer climbed the ladder of his dreams and from that ladder he fell with tragic results.

# (Isaiah 14 context)

12 “How you are fallen from heaven,  
O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
How you are cut down to the ground,  
You who weakened the nations!  
15 Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,  
To the lowest depths of the Pit.  
16 “Those who see you will gaze at you,  
And consider you, saying:  
‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble,  
Who shook kingdoms,  
17 Who made the world as a wilderness  
And destroyed its cities,  
Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’

# Up the Down Path II (Ez 28)

<sup>12</sup> “Son of man, take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, ‘Thus says the Lord God:

“You *were* the seal of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

<sup>13</sup> You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
Every precious stone *was* your covering:  
The sardius, topaz, and diamond,  
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,  
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.  
The workmanship of your timbrels and pipes  
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

# (Ezekiel 28 continued)

14 “You *were* the anointed cherub who covers;

I established you;

You were on the holy mountain of God;  
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.

15 You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created,

Till iniquity was found in you.

16 “By the abundance of your trading  
You became filled with violence within,  
And you sinned;



# (Ezekiel 28 continued)

Therefore I cast you as a profane thing  
Out of the mountain of God;  
And I destroyed you, O covering cherub,  
From the midst of the fiery stones.

<sup>17</sup> “Your heart was lifted up because of your  
beauty;

You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your  
splendor;

I cast you to the ground,  
I laid you before kings,  
That they might gaze at you.

# Elements of the Ascendant Model

- The setting for both Isaiah's and Ezekiel's depiction of prideful self-promotion and ascendant behavior is the "mountain of the Lord" (Is 14:13, Eze 28:14).
- In both narratives the offender covets position and glory that were not his own and in both cases the consequences are tragic.
- The goal of this model of rulership or leadership is dominance while coercion is considered fair play as a means to achieve that end.

# Dominance-based Leadership is Sin

We must remember though that there are universal spiritual rules that govern issues of position and glory—in both of these biblical passages the characters assume an ascendant attitude inconsistent with divine laws that govern the universe.

# Jesus Faced it

Mt 11:22

But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you.”

# The End is as the Beginning

2 Thessalonians 2:1–4

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 4 who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

# Down the Down Path

- So what is the purpose of the “down path”?
  - Mount of the Lord
    - The dwelling place of God is on its heights.
      - “Word was with God and the Word was God” (John 1:1).
      - “the Word became flesh” (John 1:14).

## (Continued)

- Emmanuel – “God with us.”
- not by requiring us to ascend the Mount but by coming down to serve our transformational needs.
- He dwelled with us (John 1:14)
- He ate with us—even with tax collectors and prostitutes (Matt 21:32)
- His preferred relationship was “friend” rather than “Master” (John 15:15).
- He came *down* to serve! (Matt 20:28)

# Descending to Serve

- He sat *down* and taught them (Jn 8:2);
- He leaned down and healed them (Mt 15:30);
- He leaned down to place his healing hand upon the little girl (Mk 5:32);
- He came down and healed (Luke 6:17);
- He cast forth the demon from the child at his feet (Lk 9:42);
- Zacchaeus was called down to be with Jesus (Lk 19:5);
- He sat down with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:6);
- He stooped down to write the words that delivered the woman taken in adultery (Jn 8:6);
- Jesus looked down upon the paralyzed man and offered to heal him (Jn 5:6);
- He reached down to mix saliva with clay and anointed the blind man and he gained his sight (Jn 9:6);
- He knelt down and washed his disciples' feet (Jn 13:5).



# Passive Ascendancy— Christ

- John 3:14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,
- John 8:28 Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.
- John 12:32 And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself.”
- Acts 1:2 until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen,
- Acts 1:9 Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.
- Acts 1:11 “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.”

# Passive Ascendancy—Us

- 1 Thes 4:16 And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them....”
- James 4:10 “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”

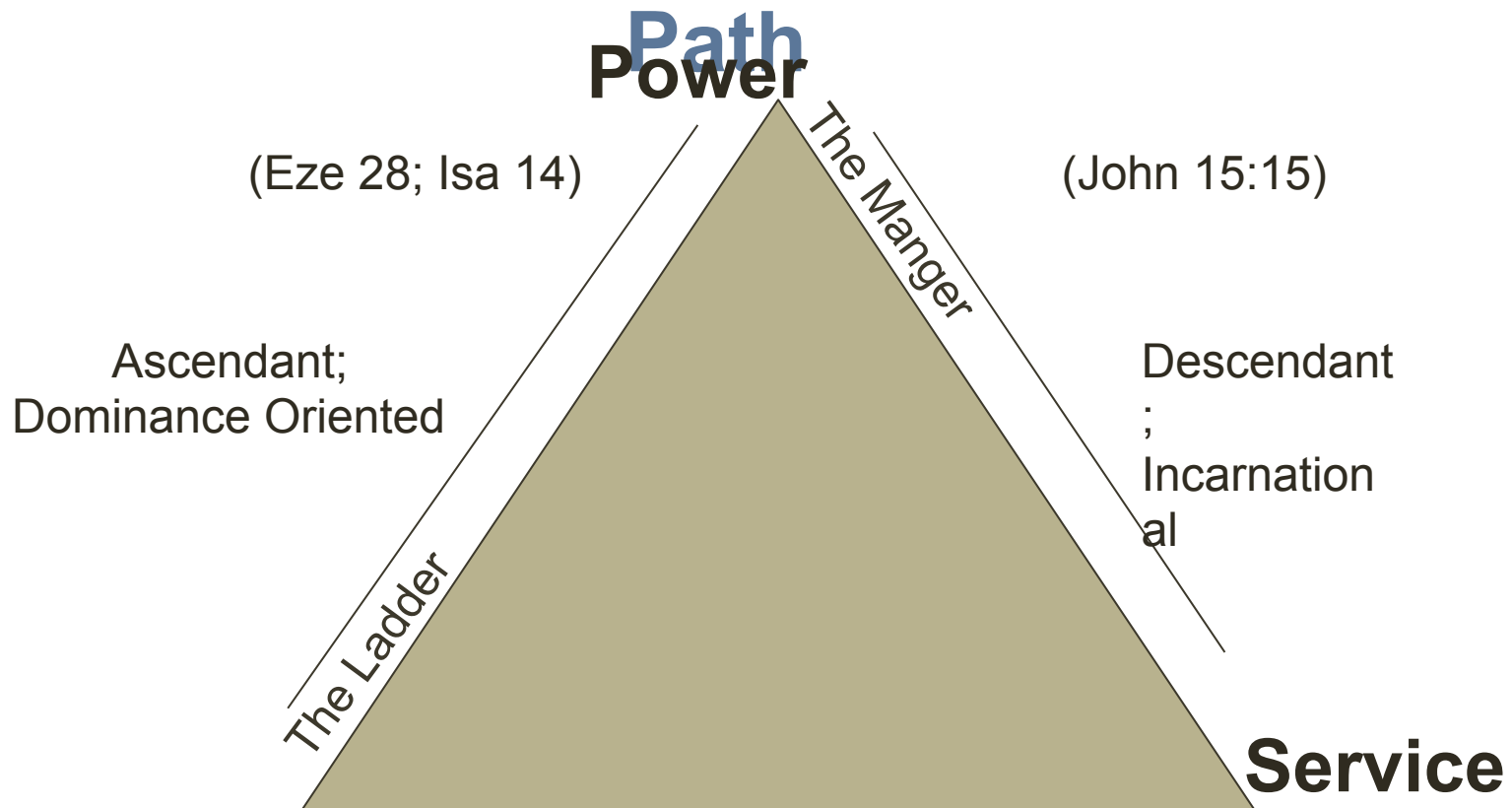
# Down Before Up

- Ephesians 4:9 Now this, “He ascended”—what does it mean but that He also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also the One who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.”
- *Acts 1:9 establishes the passive context of his ascent.*

# Contrasting Biblical Models

Up the Down path

The Down



# Laws that Govern Leadership

- law of love—love of God and fellowman (Mt 22:37-40)
- avoid selfish ambition and consider others before self (Phil 2:3)
- bear the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23)
- apply the “golden rule” (Lk 6:31)
- No “lording it over others” (Mt 20:25, 26)

# The Primacy of Love

Love is the motivator that urges us to descend to serve while all that we are apart from Christ urges us up the down path in pursuit of dominance and self-glorification.

# The Glorious Irony

- Revelation 3:21 “To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”
- Those who take the down path to service will occupy the throne where Lucifer hoped to rest.

# Our Choice—Up or Down

Our actions will either be up or down, generative or destructive, loving or uncaring. By God's grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit we may travel down the down path as we follow the footsteps of Jesus.