

## The Dominion Mandate: The Greater Commission

by Bill Scheidler

A feeling exists among many Christians that the only task or commission given to the people of God is taking the Gospel into all the world. A feeling exists among others that the world of business, science and technology is an evil world and should be avoided by all good Christians. Still others in the body of Christ feel the educational systems, the governmental establishments and the judicial systems of this world are so corrupted by humanistic philosophies they must be abandoned in view of Christ's challenge to be separate from the world.

All of these feelings among the Christian community have caused the church of Jesus Christ to neglect the first and greatest commission God has given to man. This separatist mentality has caused Christians to compartmentalize their Christianity to the point where their witness is limited to passing out tracts, leading people to Christ and gathering together on a regular basis for strength and spiritual encouragement. It has left many of God's precious people ill-equipped and powerless to affect their world's outcome in any direct way.

Some Christians have clothed their "separation mentality" with certain Bible verses or systems of theology. One system says the world is essentially evil; it is going to get worse and worse. Satan and his kingdom are getting stronger and stronger; the Church is getting weaker and weaker, but Christ will come in the nick of time and catch away the faithful few before total darkness covers the earth.

The result of this theology has been devastating to the church. It has caused the church to view the world as its enemy, and many Christians have withdrawn from active involvement in their communities. Some Christians now believe there is nothing for them in this world and their only hope is in the world to come. In other words, it has caused Christians to become remiss concerning the "**dominion mandate**".

### The Dominion Mandate

When God created man He created him good and gave him a charge that is summarized in Genesis 1:26-28

*Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*

This charge faithfully reflects God's desire and eternal purpose. God's desire was to have a man in His image, who would reach a place of maturity and fruitfulness. Some people stop here. They feel the only goal of Christianity is to restore the lost or fallen image of God in terms of character development and fruitfulness. They see Christianity

as becoming Christ-like in our attitudes and lifestyle, reaching out and bringing forth some kind of measurable fruit.

God does indeed desire this, but not as an end in itself. God wants man in His image and likeness, but He also wants man to enter into a God-like function. His desire is that man in His image would take dominion over the works of His hands and subdue the earth. Jesus was constantly about His Father's business (Luke 2:49).

**The Father's business involves ruling and reigning and restoring divine order and dominion to all of the created world.**

God's commandment to Adam has never been revoked. Even though Adam sinned and became a slave to sin, God's plan is that through Christ, dominion would be restored. In Christ man would again be equipped to carry on and fulfill this original commandment given to Adam. God wants a godly offspring who will be fruitful and multiply bringing divine rule and order to every area of life on this planet earth. This includes the world of nature, science, education, law, government and business. All is to be brought into submission under the divine will of God's eternal purpose.

God's charge to Adam involves three main concepts. Adam was to be fruitful, he was to subdue and he was to exercise dominion.

**Becoming Fruitful**

When God gave His mandate to Adam the first challenge was to be fruitful. When God used the word "fruitful" He was not speaking of character development or maturity, He was talking numbers. He wanted Adam with the help of his wife, to "fill up" the earth with godly offspring all reflecting the same image and likeness in which Adam had been created. He wanted the earth to be populated with a godly people living under the government of God all bearing the stamp of God's image upon them.

God has never been interested in a small family. When He gave the promise of plenteous offspring to the Father of the Faith in Genesis 12:1-3, He was communicating His Father's heart to this earthly father Abraham. God's heart gets just as excited about many sons and daughters as Abraham's did at the thought of offspring as innumerable as the stars of the heavens, the sand of the seashore and the dust of the earth.

God's desire and plan is not for a "little flock" but that "many sons" be brought to glory. If we, as God's people, are to meet this challenge then we must focus on the masses of humanity. We must not close ourselves off to the outside world and become introverted where the focus is only upon the maturity and perfection of a few select Christians making up an imagined "Bride Company". No! WE must hit the streets with the gospel. We must go out into the highways and hedges. We must reach the un-reached masses of humanity. We must do everything we can to see that the gospel goes into all the world.

The early church saw masses of people turn to the Lord (Acts 2:41; 4:4). They saw entire communities turned around (Acts 8:6-8). They saw such an influx of people that in a few years the Christians would make up a majority of the civilized world. We must pick up where the early church left off and begin to believe God for these kinds of results.

## **Subduing the Earth**

A second challenge given to Adam was to subdue the earth. The word “subdue” means, “to tread down, conquer, subjugate, bring into subjection”. It is also the root word for the word “footstool”. God was essentially saying to Adam, “I want you to conquer this earth. I want you to bring it into subjection so that all of this earth is corresponding to My will and purpose. I want you to make this earth your footstool.”

God was implying to Adam that this subjection would not be automatic. An enemy is out there. There are forces that must be acknowledged and overcome. Your leadership on this planet will be challenged. There is a wicked one who will contest your right to bear rule and will seek to overcome you. But, Adam, you must subdue him, conquer him and put him under your feet.

God placed Adam in a garden, which He himself had planted. It was a beautiful place in which to dwell. This garden only represented a small part of the earth. God’s desire was that, as Adam was faithful to dress and keep this garden that He had placed in his hands, Adam would be able to extend the borders of the garden, with the help of his faithful offspring, so the whole earth would become a garden of the Lord. This desire of God has not changed. His desire is still to see the earth filled as widely with the knowledge of the Lord’s glory as waters cover the sea.

### **A subduing ministry involves five things:**

#### **1. Making your enemies your footstool.**

We know the enemies that must be dealt with are essentially spiritual in nature. This was true with Adam and it is true for us, his descendents. Adam failed to subdue his real enemy and was, in fact, subdued himself. But Christ who is the last Adam restored man’s ability to conquer by dealing a mortal wound to the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15; Colossians 2:15). Now as the head of the church He is seated waiting until the church, which is His body, walks out this victory in their experience (Psalm 110:1-2; Hebrews 10:12-13; Ephesians 1:19-23).

#### **2. Putting your feet on the necks of kings.**

Many spiritual kings are to be defeated by the church. The gates of hell will not prevail against God’s victorious army (Matthew 16:18). God’s promises to His people have always included the “necks” of their enemies (Genesis 49:8). When kings were conquered by an army, before they were beheaded the conquering people would put their feet on the necks of these kings symbolizing their absolute victory (Joshua 10:24; I Samuel 22:38-41). God wants the church to put its feet on the neck of kings of darkness (Romans 16:20).

#### **3. Bringing an enemy into servitude.**

Subduing an enemy is to force that enemy to serve you rather than you becoming its servant (I Chronicles 28:10; Jeremiah 34:11, 16). There was a time, due to Adam’s fall, that we were the servants of sin, but now God has, through the work of the last Adam, made us to rule over sin (Romans 6:8-23).

#### **4. Driving out all enemies and possessing our full inheritance.**

God has given us a rich inheritance. In fact He has given all things for the pleasure of his people (Ephesians 1:9-11; Revelations 21:7). He gave Abraham the entire earth but he had to walk through it and subdue it (Genesis 13:14-17). He gave Israel the whole land of Palestine but they had to go through it and possess it (Numbers 32:20-22, 29; Joshua 18:1). This involved driving out all the enemies dwelling in the land. Israel failed to drive out all their enemies. They tolerated some because of their strength. They compromised with others because of their own love of ease. But God raised up David to drive all these well-noted enemies out and he extended the borders of the kingdom further than they had ever been extended before (II Samuel 18:11). David drove out the stubborn ones.

Many Christians have begun a good battle against sin in their life, but they have never really reached the dominion stage because they have grown weary in battle and have settled for an incomplete victory. But, praise God! Just because you have lived with an enemy for a long time does not mean that you have to put up with him forever.

God is returning the spirit of David to His people, which is not tolerant of long-time enemies. God is building in His people a fresh intolerance of sin and its inroads into the lives of people. God is sharpening the instruments of war among the people of God so they can effectively wage war with previously unmolested enemies. The giants are beginning to fall.

#### **5. Treading down enemies.**

God clearly told His people that the whole land was theirs (Genesis 13:14-17), but they had to walk through it (Deuteronomy 11:22-25). God told them every place the sole of their foot tread upon would be theirs (Joshua 1:13). God said through His power we would be able to tread down all our enemies (Psalms 60:12; 108:13; 91:13). Jesus specifically gave this power to His disciples (Luke 10:19-20).

The problem with most Christians is they have not realized that all of the land belongs to them. The land of politics is their land. The land of business and enterprise is their land. The land of medical science, technology, space exploration is part and parcel of the land given to them by God. But Christians have been unwilling to place the sole of their foot on this land for fear they might become soiled or contaminated. They have run from the lion and the cobra rather than picking them up by the tail (Psalms 91:13; Exodus 4:4).

God wants the church to take this mandate to subdue seriously. He wants the church to be ready to bring the forces of this world into subjection to the will and purpose of God (I Corinthians 15:27-28). The workings of Christ and the power of Christ in our life are designed for this very purpose (Philippians 3:21).

#### **Exercising Dominion**

The third aspect of the dominion mandate is the logical outworking of the second. God ultimately wants His people to reign in this life. We are to exercise dominion, not merely over our Sunday school programs and “church ministries” but also over “the fish

of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth”. That is pretty inclusive.

The word “dominion” means to take possession of and rule over”. God created Adam to be a king. Even as Christ came to “shatter the forehead of Moab” so He made us to have dominion (Psalm 8:6). The promise to God’s obedient people is they would reign over many nations but those nations would not reign over them (Deuteronomy 15:6). It is clear God’s people are to be the kings and the priests that reign *on the earth* (Revelations 5:10).

God wants to use His people in this day as a David company to extend His dominion to the ends of the earth. God wants His people to see themselves as kingdom builders concerned about all of life and every area of life. God wants a kingdom that extends from sea to sea (Psalms 72:8) all the while using our place as a means of extending the Gospel to all mankind. Each believer has a mandate to do his or her part. The command given to Adam has never been revoked. It is indeed the Greater Commission.