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For Grandparents, Parents and Seniors

By Rick Shrader

The Dominion Mandate

The Dominion Mandate was given to Adam and then jointly to Eve in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion. . .” It is repeated in 1:28, “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion. . .’” The Mandate is also explained in Gen. 2:5-17; restated in 9:2-3; and mentioned again in Psalm 8:6-8. Roland McCune wrote, “This program of stewardship responsibility began with the Dominion Mandate of Genesis 1:26-27 and is forwarded by the progressive unfolding of God’s revelational light in succeeding dispensations” (*Systematic*, I, 139). The Mandate is passed on to us but with modifications. The obvious failure in successive generations is to worship and serve the creation more than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

The Garden was a big place (from Cush to the Euphrates river) and Adam needed help. “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make a helper comparable to him” (2:18). Though the Mandate called for procreation, it first called for help. “Let them have dominion” (1:26). “Then God blessed them, and God said to them, be fruitful . . . And have dominion” (1:28). This is no doubt why God made a female for Adam, “male and female He created them” (1:27). He could have made another man or a number of men. But they could not have multiplied. Why is that important? “This makes perfect sense. For if one gardener is not enough for such a great garden, nor will two be. They need to start a whole family of gardeners” (Ash, *Married for God*, 36). This Mandate will go on for generations and generations are needed to fulfill it.

The responsibility at the beginning included the disobedience regarding the trees. Adam failed to protect and lead, and Eve failed to submit and follow.

In spite of that, their respective jobs in the Mandate would continue. Adam’s primary job was to till the ground and Eve’s was to fill the earth. However, his would be with sweat and hers would be with pain (Gen. 3:16-19). In addition, the problem of headship and complementarity would continually plague the family, “Your desire shall be for [over] your husband, and he shall rule [harshly] over you” (3:16).

There has been an ongoing controversy over the Dominion Mandate (see the book review on the 2nd page). Many today think we must re-establish the Mosaic law (“Theonomy”) and seek to bring in the kingdom of God in all parts of culture and government (“postmillennialism”) even to the extent of overthrowing existing governments. The fact is, we cannot change the world ourselves and bring in a millennium of peace and godliness. Only Jesus Christ can do that by His glorious return to this world and the judgments and blessings that will result. In this dispensation we still have dominion over the animals and the earth but our failure will be to worship the earth (or climate) and lower man to the level of animals.

The church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” in this age (1 Tim. 3:15). Our stewardship of the Dominion Mandate is to preach the gospel to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20) and to worship the Lord Jesus in spirit and truth (John 4:24) through the local church. It still takes families to accomplish this task, fathers and mothers who work, worship, and evangelize and children who grow up to take over this business. Satan is working hard to win the day and he will win a brief victory at the end of the age. But Jesus Christ will take His church home and then, after deposing Satan, will return and set up a kingdom dominion that cannot be removed.

Book Review:

Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?

By H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice

The subject of Dominion Theology, Theonomy, Reconstructionism is still very popular. This (1988) book is a textbook treatment and critique of the movement made popular in the late 20th century by R. J. Rushdoony, Gary North, Greg Bahnsen, David Chilton, and others. Though it appears old, it is amazingly up-to-date in its definitions, history, and theology of the movement. Dominion Theology, Theonomy, Reconstructionism (and sometimes “Christian Nationalism”) are names for a postmillennial view of history in which advocates have been trying to bring about the kingdom of God by human means. Postmillennialism is the view that Christians will convert the world and make it into the kingdom (millennium) so that Jesus Christ can return (hence, “post”) and take His rule. Reconstructionists believe that God’s Dominion Mandate requires that God’s law (the actual Mosaic, Old Testament, law) must be enacted in every nation as its constitution. They believe that all other laws, including the United States’ constitution, are fallible human laws and are therefore lawless in the eyes of God. The institution of the Mosaic law would require any nation to govern itself by every civil and moral law of the Old Testament. This would include stoning as the form of capital punishment for adultery, abortion, homosexuality, and even disobedience to parents. This would also include dietary laws and some form of voluntary slavery. Religious, or ceremonial, laws of sacrifices are usually excluded as fulfilled in Christ’s sacrifice.

This book will inform the reader of the entire history of this movement, their postmillennial and often Reformed theology, their antipathy toward other views especially premillennial dispensationalism, and it will reinforce the biblical doctrines concerning a coming future kingdom and the believer’s command to look and wait for it.

Note: A version of Dominion Theology is sometimes called “Christian Nationalism” and connected with Doug Wilson of Moscow, Idaho and James Wesley Rawles and the “Redoubt” movement. Christian Nationalism is often used also to refer to a number of political movements not necessarily connected to Reconstructionism, though Wilson and Rawles are post-millennial reconstructionists.

Statistics:

“The U.S. population demographic growing most quickly is those over the age of sixty-five. They represent more than a quarter of the entire population, seventy-eight million in total. Approximately 7,918 people turn sixty-two each day. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of Americans over the age of sixty-five has tripled; average life expectancy has risen from forty-seven to seventy-eight years. Today, over 90 percent of Americans can expect to live past the age of sixty-five, and most of these older adults will become grandparents” (p. 52).

“One stereotype of a grandparent is someone who is physically frail and old-fashioned in thought and lifestyle. This perception is not correct. Approximately half of grandparents are under the age of sixty and are not members of the elderly population, with the medium age between fifty-three and fifty-seven. Research shows that the average grandparent becomes a grandparent at an early age, lives longer than previous generations, is healthier, is financially stable, and has a living spouse . . . Nearly one-third of grandparents experience grandparenthood ‘off time,’ younger than forty or older than sixty.” (p. 98).

Josh Mulvihill, *Biblical Grandparenting* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2018)

A Biblical Picture of an Old Disciple

“There went with us also certain of the disciples of Caesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge” (Acts 21:16).

The word translated “old” here is *archaios*, meaning ancient, original, primeval, a veteran. It is used in the New Testament as “them of old time” (Matt 5:21); the “old world” (2 Pet 2:5); “one of the old prophets has risen again” (Luke 9:19).

Matthew Henry commented on Mnason, “It is honorable to be an old disciple of Jesus Christ, to have been enabled by the grace of God to continue long in a course of duty, steadfast in the faith, and growing more and more prudent and experienced to a good old age. And with these old disciples one would choose to lodge; for the multitude of their years will teach wisdom” (*The Acts*, p. 277).