



CREATION AND THE BEGINNING OF HUMAN HISTORY

#17 – Man’s Authority To Rule The Earth Genesis 1:28

PICTURES NEEDED

- 17-1 Family with children
- 17-2 Productive farmland

REVIEW (Before Teaching Lesson)

- **Journal Review:** Ask students to share an important truth that they learned from their journal readings at home that week. Share some of your own insights.
- **Previous Lesson Review:** (Use the visual from the last lesson to aid in review)
What does it mean to be created in the image of God? What does it mean to have a mind? A will? Emotions? What is the difference between God’s mind and man’s mind? God’s will and man’s will? God’s emotions and man’s emotions? How can a person reflect God’s character?
- **The Big Question Review:** How are we to reflect God’s image?
Let the students give their answers to the question.
- **Bible Verse Review:** Deuteronomy 10:12-13
We are to walk in God’s ways and serve him.

¹² And now, O Israel, (what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,) ¹³ and to observe the LORD’s commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

LESSON CONTENT

Note: The Bible verses included in the lesson are from the NIV 1984 edition. The wording of the questions is derived from that version. If another version of the Bible is used, questions may need to be adapted.

Once God created people, his creation was complete. Because man was made in the image of God, he is the height of God's creation. God gave man special instructions concerning his creation. Genesis 1:28 says, *"God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'"*

What are the two commands God gave to man concerning the earth? The first command was for man to be fruitful and fill the earth with his offspring and the second was for man to rule over the earth and all that is in it.

How did God design people to be fruitful and fill the earth? (picture 17-1) In order to be fruitful and fill the earth God designed men and women to come together in marriage and have children. In this way they would increase in number and populate the earth.

God also gave man the responsibility for ruling over the earth. What is a ruler? A ruler is someone who has authority over an area of land and whatever lies in it. Man was given authority over the earth. Psalm 115:16 says, The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

What is the responsibility of a good ruler? A good ruler looks out for the best interest of all his subjects and takes care of the land they live in. He makes decisions based on what is good for others and puts aside selfish interests. He does what is right in all circumstances.

How did God intend for man to treat the earth? (picture 17-2) In making people ruler over the earth, God intended for them to be creative and productive as he is creative and productive. People are to be good stewards of God's creation, using it in a wise way for beneficial purposes. They are not to exploit or ruin what God has created for their own selfish purposes. They are to care for what God has made in a way that honors God, benefits others and enhances God's creation.

If people are to be the rulers over the earth then who is the ruler over them? While people rule or have authority over God's creation, God has authority and is the ruler over them. He has created man and has authority over him. Psalm 97:1 says, The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad; let the distant shores rejoice.

What does it mean to reign? To reign means to possess and to exercise complete authority over something. If the earth is glad and the shores rejoice that God reigns, that means that God is a good ruler.

What are the attributes of God that make him a good ruler? (List these on the board as the children give them and add some of your own.)

Because God is holy and perfect he is a good ruler. He won't do anything wrong. He loves his creation with a never ending love and watches over it to direct it along a path towards

him and what is good. He looks to the interest of his creation and does what is right for all of it. He provides for its needs. He judges all things fairly.

When are people good rulers over God's creation? People are only good rulers over God's creation when they reflect God's image and do what he would do. If people act in selfish ways and try to use God's creation for their own purposes then they ruin and destroy what is good. In order to rule the earth wisely and well, people need to fear God and be in right relationship with him.

What does it mean to fear the Lord? To fear the Lord means that we recognize we are under God's authority and answerable to him for our actions. Those who fear and obey God will be blessed because they will do what pleases God. They will be good rulers like God and do what is right.

LESSON WRAP-UP

- **Overview Questions:** What were God's two commands to man concerning the earth? What is the responsibility of a good ruler? What does it mean to fear God? Why do men need to fear God and submit to his authority?
- **Thought Questions:** How has man fulfilled God's two commands concerning the earth? How has man abused his authority? What is the general attitude of people toward God? Why don't people fear God and submit to his authority? What is the outcome of that?
- **Prayer:** Thank God for the wonderful world he has made. Acknowledge that the world and everything in it belong to God. Pray that you would recognize how much you need to submit to God's authority and how you should take care of what God has made.
- **The Big Question: What responsibility has God given to man?**
Let the students give their answers to the question. Share the memory verse. Ask how it answers the question.
- **Memory Verse:** Psalm 115:16 God gave the earth to man to take care of.

The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to man.

Questions: What does it mean that the highest heavens belong to God? What does it mean that God has given the earth to man?

ACTIVITIES (Completed after the lesson)

Any age appropriate activity can be included which fits into the class time. The activities with a star are included on the class notes.

★ **Lesson Notes:** Have the children answer the two questions individually or as a group.

What did you learn from this lesson? How can you put into practice what you learned?

★ **Memory Verse:** Read the memory verse on the cover of the class notes and then have the students fill in the blanks in the verse.

★ **Activity Page:** Being a Good Steward

The responsibility to rule over the earth means that man is to be a good steward of God's creation. A steward is someone who takes charge of and carefully and responsibly manages the resources that belong to someone else. What are ways we as individuals can conserve and responsibly manage the resources of the earth? (On the journal sheet is a crossword puzzle to fill in with the answers below. Discuss how and when the children can do each of these things. The craft would be a good activity to do after filling in the crossword puzzle.)

1. Respect living things.
2. Save electricity.
3. Reuse bags.
4. Buy less things.
5. Share rides.
6. Recycle trash.
7. Conserve water.
8. Plant trees.

★ **This Week's Big Question:** Have the students fill in the blanks for the way the memory verse answers the big question.

God gave the earth to man to take care of.

★ **Coloring Page:** Color the lesson picture.

• **Craft:** Good Steward Poster

As a reminder that God has made man to be a good ruler over the earth, color in a good steward conservation poster.

Materials: card stock paper, crayons or colored pencils

Preparation: Print off craft 17 on card stock paper.

Instructions: Have the children color in the pictures. This can be done as a contest to see who does the best coloring job.

• **Game:** Mother may I?

As a reminder that we are to submit both to God's authority and those he has given authority to rule over, us play "Mother may I?".

Instructions: Select one child to be the mother. The mother stands at one end of the play area and the other children line up at the other end. The mother gives an instruction as to how many and what types of steps each child can make. To take the steps the child must ask, "Mother may I?". If he forgets to ask permission, he has to go back and start again. The first child to reach the mother gets to be the next mother.

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six poetic readings and related Bible verses. It would be beneficial for the teacher to read through and be familiar with its content.