



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, *²⁸God 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:** Ask the students to summarize in one sentence what the lesson was about. Then have them give three main points covered in the lesson. An example is below.

Theme: God gave people the responsibility to fill the earth and rule over it. A ruler is the person who is in charge.

1. Men and women are to get married and have children to fill the earth.
2. Men and women are to be good rulers over what God has made.
3. Men and women are to remember that God is their ruler.

★ **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 people are to be good stewards 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.)

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

★ **Further Understanding:** Investigation/Reasoning Skills

Characteristics of a good government

Man's right to govern was established when God gave him authority over the earth. To be good, government has to be subjected to God's authority and act in accordance with both the written and natural laws God has put in place. The founders of our nation understood biblical principles when they set up our government.

Instructions: Read the Preamble to the Constitution and discuss each element of government and why it is necessary and good. On the class notes, the students can write down the meaning of each element. Each element is followed by discussion questions.

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union(1), establish Justice(2), insure domestic Tranquility(3), provide for the common defense(4), promote the general Welfare(5), and secure the Blessings of Liberty (6) to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

1 – Form a more perfect union: Join together as one people, under one good and effective government.

What happens when a nation isn't unified? What happens when the government is not good? What happens when the government is not effective?

2 – Establish justice: Make law fair for and apply it equally to all people.

What happens when laws are not fair? What happens when laws don't apply equally to everyone? What are examples of laws not being applied equally?

3 – Insure domestic tranquility: Keep peace and stability in the land through good laws and a police force.

What happens when people don't respect and follow the law? What happens when there isn't peace and stability?

4 – Provide for the common defense: Protect from outside invaders.

What happens when there isn't an army strong enough to protect a nation?

5 – Promote the general welfare: Encourage and strengthen that which helps people prosper like property rights and a work ethic.

What happens when people don't have a right to keep their own property? What happens when people don't know how to sustain hard work?

6 – Secure the blessings of liberty: Instill the principles of good government and the importance of good character in the people so the nation and the protection of rights will be sustained for future generations.

What happens when people see the role of government to take care of them rather than fulfill the principles of good government stated in the preamble? What happens when the people of a nation do not as a whole demonstrate good character?

JOURNAL

The journal is passed out at the end of class for the students to complete at home. It has six readings that answer a digging deeper question. It would be beneficial for the teacher to work through the journal readings also.

Digging Deeper: Why should we fear God?

Reading 1: Psalm 115:9-18 God will remember us and bless us.

Why should we trust in the Lord? Who will God bless? Who has God given the earth to?

What does that mean?

Reading 2: Psalm 34:1-10 Those who fear God lack nothing.

What happens to those who seek God? What does God do for those who fear him?

Reading 3: Psalm 34:11-22 God will be attentive to our prayers.

What will we do if we fear God? How does God respond to those who fear him and do what is right? What happens to those who do evil?

Reading 4: Psalm 8:1-9 God's glory is above the heavens.

Why should we praise and fear God? What does it mean to be mindful? Why is God mindful of men? What responsibilities has God given to men?

Reading 5: Psalm 33:12-22 God knows everything we do.

What does God know about us? Why is he able to know all that? On whom does God keep his eyes? What does that mean he does for them?

Reading 6: Ecclesiastes 5:8-15 Taking care of God's creation

Reflect on what it means to take care of God's creation and then think of ways you can do your part in taking care of it.