

## Is There a Dominion Mandate?

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### Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of the dominion mandate. It examines the key passages of Scripture in which the dominion mandate has found its origin. It explores the observational evidence of man's interaction with nature and questions if there is any true dominion that can be observed. It then proceeds to examine the Bible for evidence of the original dominion of Adam being extant and offers a rebuttal to the idea of a dominion mandate with a counter position.

**Keywords:** dominion mandate, moral dominion, dominion of man, subdue the earth, image of God, law of God.

### Introduction

A common position amongst young-earth creationists, and even the wider evangelical community, is that mankind has dominion on earth. This means that mankind has been given a special authority and rule over the creatures and the Creation. This concept is so widely applied and held that it has even earned a special doctrinal name, which is the dominion mandate.

From this concept, it has been inferred by many that a command was given to Adam, and all of his descendants, to have dominion and rule over all the animal kind, and the Creation. Therefore, all of humanity are recipients of this perceived Adamic dominion.

The dominion mandate, itself, is not named nor defined in Scripture, and so offering a deeper definition, which everyone can agree on, is not possible. However, it is possible to locate where the idea of the dominion mandate stems from. It is the biblical passage 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."

In very clear language the Bible explains that man was made in the image of God and was given dominion over the creatures and was given the authority to subdue the earth.

The Hebrew word for dominion in the biblical text is *râdâh*. *Râdâh* means dominion, reign, to prevail against, and rule. It can also mean subjugation, to

tread down upon, and even crumble off (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 2008, p.921; Strong 1979).

Within the context of the Creation, and then the subsequent fall, one finds it quite moving at the lexical range of *râdâh*. Adam had dominion and rule over creation and within this reign and rule he had the ability to sustain the good creation through obedience. But equally so, Adam had the power to make the good creation crumble and suffer if he was disobedient to the command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

For those who understand the biblical narrative, and what self-imposed trauma soon followed in Adam's life, the ability to have a dominion, and then to utterly crumble all under his dominion is a sobering reality. It is also a poignant reminder of the position and power handed to man from the Creator at the very beginning.

It is from these exalted beginnings in the good creation that the dominion mandate has been fashioned and formed by theologians to demonstrate the importance and place of man. But does the so-called dominion mandate assume too much?

### The Theological Application of the Dominion Mandate

Using the concept of the Dominion Mandate (among other concepts as well), creationists argue against the evolutionary assertion that mankind is just an accidental walking sac of bone and water that somehow gained consciousness. Creationists, rather, argue mankind has a distinct purpose and plan endowed by the Creator and use the dominion mandate as a doctrinal proof of this assertion.

But the dominion mandate does not stop there. It has been given an extraordinary weight of explanation over a wide swath of issues. The dominion mandate has been used as the reason why aliens cannot exist or visit earth (Bates 2010, p.378). It is used to argue why man is morally allowed to clone animals (Sarfati

2002), and it is used as a call for good stewardship over the environment (Wieland and Sarfati 2002). Some extend it to mean that we should exercise dominion over our “personalities and abilities” (Erickson 2009, p.535) and that we should even be able to predict and control the actions of the Creation due to this dominion (Erickson 2009, p.529).

The breadth of its application is a bit overwhelming and is the first red flag. When some singular ideal is used as the proof argument for topics as widely different as these, then one should recognize that the ideal must not be precisely defined; for it is being employed as a proof argument on topics which are not necessarily closely related.

More problems arrive when the dominion mandate is treated like a command from God.

One creationist wrote: “This ‘dominion mandate,’ as it has been called, is in effect a command to ‘do science...’” (Morris 2010, p.4).

Another uses surprisingly strong language and wrote that God, “...[God] ordered mankind to ‘subdue’ the earth—also known as the dominion mandate (Genesis 1:28)” (Bates 2010, p.378).

Overstating the case by saying this dominion mandate is an order or a command has wide consequences to the biblical narrative. With an order or command comes an implied obedience to the one to whom it was given. Therefore, the idea of an order being inserted into that particular passage places an extra burden of obedience on Adam before the Fall beyond just not eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Therefore, this additional command leads to the question that if Adam failed to subdue the earth, before the Fall, would that have been a sin? If so, what would the consequence be? Would Adam have been banished from of the Garden? Would that have brought condemnation to all mankind?

As one can see, it is not such an easy proposition to casually refer to dominion as a command. It is imperative to understand that there were no other moral obligations that Adam had other than to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. For without eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there would not have been any sin or moral failures.

There was no wider, broader law of God that Adam was under. There was no commandment to keep the Sabbath holy or any other command outside of the one, as some have suggested. To assume any part of the Torah, which was given to Moses to govern the nation of Israel, which in turn laid out the path to redemption because of the original sin, actually applied to Adam before the original sin, is a flawed understanding of the entire plan of God and the road to redemption.

Also notice that this dominion was not described as a command in the biblical text. The biblical language of *’āsâh*, which many modern translations render “...Let Us make...” in Genesis 1:26, means to appoint, bestow, have charge of, grant, advance (Brown, Driver, and Briggs 2008; Strong 1979).

Therefore, this passage is best understood to mean a right was passed from the Godhead to Adam. What was given to Adam was a position of dominion and it was an endowment, an appointment; something bestowed, a position that was granted. It was not an order that was given.

We see the same usage as this for *’āsâh* in 1 Kings 12:31 (English Standard Version translation): “He also made temples on high places and *appointed* [*’āsâh*] priests from among all the people, who were not of the Levites.”

This understanding of *’āsâh*, in this context, being a position of appointment enjoys the collective agreement by the biblical scholars who worked on important biblical translations in history.

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (Genesis 1:26 English Standard Version).

And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” (Genesis 1:26 King James Version).

Furthermore God said, Let vs make man in our image according to our likenes, and let them rule ouer the fish of the sea, and the ouer the foule of the heauen, and ouer the beastes, & ouer all the earth, and ouer the beastes, & ouer all the earth, and ouer euerie thing that crepeth & moueth on the earth (Genesis 1:26 The Geneva Bible 1560).

Make we man to oure ymage and liknesse, and be he soueryn to the fischis of the see, and to the volatilis of heuene, and to vnresonable beestis of erthe, and to ech creature, and to ech crepynge beest, which is moued in erthe (Genesis 1:26 The Wycliffe Bible of 1388).

Then God said, “Let us make humankind according to our image and according to our likeness, and let them rule the fish of the sea and the birds of the sky and the cattle and all the earth and all creeping things that creep upon the earth (Genesis 1:26 New English Translation of the Septuagint).

The key phrase of “Let us make” (*’āsâh*) applies to the image of man but then again to the dominion of man, which we see rendered, “let them have dominion, let them rule, and be he sovereign.” It is

very clear that a commanding position was being given to man, which is different from “commanding man to command,” which is how those championing a dominion mandate have rendered it in concept.

The burden of proof to reestablish dominion as a forceful demand from God to Adam, which required obedience, must lie with proponents of the dominion mandate for it breaks from precedent.

In contrast, let us look at how God does issue a command. Genesis 2:16–17 reads:

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

The Hebrew word in this passage for “commanded” is *tsâvâh*. This word is absent in Genesis 1:26–28, and notice the difference between Genesis 1:26–28 and Genesis 2:16–17. In the latter, the command to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was paired with a consequence if that command was disobeyed. Neither this Hebrew word for command nor a consequence is found in Genesis 1:26–28 when discussing the dominion of man.

The idea that dominion was a command to Adam is alien to the biblical text. What is relayed in the Jewish Scriptures, which all respected translations remain true to, is that God, before the Fall, let Adam have a position of authority in creation.

### Pre-Fall Environment

We also understand that in the beginning, before the Fall, Adam lived in an environment that was much different from our environment today. A pre-Fall world would have been fundamentally different, and just because something was applicable before the Fall does not mean it is applicable after the Fall (and the reverse of this is also true.)

Furthermore, we understand that the natural environment itself was different in a pre-Fall format. In Genesis 3:17 it is explained that the ground was cursed after the Fall and it became an obstacle to man. Which, on face value, appears to be a contradiction to the idea of man maintaining dominion over it.

Therefore, it is prudent to explore the post-Fall world and see if there is naturalistic evidence of man’s dominion over nature and over the animal kind.

### Dominion over Nature

Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornados, floods, hail, wild fires, volcanoes, meteor strikes, etc. do not demonstrate an obedience to man’s reign or will.

Natural disasters often put mankind at their mercy. These things demonstrate occurrences that force man to respond to them as best as man can. In the present natural environment, conditions are adverse and man’s ingenuity sometimes overcomes, but sometimes it does not. Man is killed by acts of nature every year.

However, Yeshua (Jesus) demonstrated that He did have dominion over nature in the calming of the seas. The Bible records for us that the Last Adam displayed an authority, a dominion, over creation.

In contrast to Yeshua, fallen man has no such command or rule over nature. The disciples of Messiah were amazed that the sea obeyed the command of Messiah (Luke 8:24–25). The disciples obviously did not have dominion over creation, but they witnessed someone who did.

In addition to destructive events, there are thorns, thistles, and weeds, which choke out the farmers crops. These also do not demonstrate an obedience to the will of the farmer, nor do all the insects which feed on the roots of the crops. In fact, in today’s post-Fall environment, growing crops is best likened to engaging in “warfare” in the soil.<sup>1</sup>

### Does the “Dominion Mandate” Imply, and/or is it Achieved through Technological Advances?

It has been suggested to this author, that the Adamic dominion implies the work to subdue the forces of nature like creating air conditioning and inventing polio vaccinations, etc.

Let no one be confused. Dominion is not the attempt or work to try to subdue.

Nowhere is the struggle to overcome actually labeled the victory. Likewise, nor should the struggle against nature be labeled as the dominion.

One may have air conditioning, but many still fall to heat stroke. Let us not be too confident in the technological prowess we achieve. A quick walk through a wing at a hospital that treats terminally ill patients will solve our pride in believing we have achieved dominion over disease because we have created a few vaccinations.

Furthermore, the whole idea that a demonstration of our original Adamic dominion is seen in our creation of polio vaccinations, etc. is untenable. How low, distorted, and impotent our view of true dominion is, when we liken dominion to needing to stab our fleshly bodies with metal needles which introduce foreign entities into our body, precisely because mankind has been made ill or killed by entities that have already invaded our bodies precisely because they did not recognize our dominion.

<sup>1</sup> In a personal communication with Dr. Horace Skipper, soil microbiologist and Professor Emeritus of Clemson University, he described a biological warfare in the soil due to the attacking entities, which feed on the seed of the crop and compete for soil nutrients. Farmers must fight back or suffer a loss of crop.

It is poor reasoning to conclude that our responses to our lack of dominion are the actual demonstration of our dominion. Many have thought themselves into confusion in the hopes of hanging on to a human rule.

### Hurricane Sandy

Even further evidence of man's lack of dominion over nature has been seen in catastrophic levels recently. The United States mobilized some of the most robust tools and resources in mankind's history to contend against the effects of Hurricane Sandy. Yet, no one in their right mind would say that those emergency workers in the affected areas are exhibiting and achieving dominion over the wrath of Sandy.

In fact, what Hurricane Sandy has shown, is that man, in one of the most technologically advanced areas the world has ever seen, has zero dominion over his environment when nature does the unexpected. Hurricane Sandy has, in effect, made a farce of any dominion we think we have.

As a warning, the theological/apologist community opens itself up to extraordinary attack from the secular world if key members continue to promote such a dominion over nature.

### Dominion over Animals

Lions, bears, rhinoceroses, sharks, snakes, sting rays etc. do not demonstrate a subjection to man's will.

As man migrates into more of their territory we see the instances of animal attacks increase. It is obvious the animal kingdom does not demonstrate subjection to man even though Adam was given dominion over these creatures in Genesis 1:28.

Everyone can observe man's lack of dominion over life forms every day if one just pays attention. Every time a tick is pulled from the skin, a mosquito bites, a mouse scurries across the floor, a fish does not bite the bait is a demonstration that these creatures recognize no dominion or wish of man.

So strong is the case that man was eager to create insect repellants and other devices (mouse traps, etc.) as a response to the creatures blatant insubordination. We must protect our homes against pests (think termites) because they will and do invade our places even though our strongest will is that they would not. These creatures do not recognize our domain. These creatures will not heed a rebuke and so we fight back to kill the invaders.

However, often these encounters between man and beast go beyond a simple annoyance.

An Australian zookeeper was attacked by the very elephant she was caring for. CNN reported that:

A zookeeper was in stable condition at a Sydney hospital Saturday, a day after she was crushed by a young male elephant during a training session (Anonymous 2012a).

Some elephants have been successfully domesticated, but the majority of elephants remain a danger to humans if boundaries are violated. Even so-called domesticated creatures still remain a viable threat to humans. This obvious threat challenges the central idea that man has an extant dominion over the animal kind.

Another exhibit of the lack of man's dominion over the animal kind is this terrible and terrifying example of the pet python who killed a toddler.

Charles Darnell awoke Wednesday morning to find his girlfriends' [*sic*] 2-year-old daughter in the tight clutches of his 12-foot pet Burmese python. The fatal incident occurred around 10 a.m. at Darnell's residents [*sic*], 60 miles northwest of Orlando.

The python apparently escaped from the confines of its cage overnight and strangled the toddler. Darnell, the snake's owner stabbed the snake in order to free the girl from the snake's death grip. Charles was able to pull the two-year-old free before calling 911.

Despite paramedic's efforts to revive the 2-year-old, she was pronounced dead at the scene (Roberts 2009).

A power of the biblical faith is that it is an immensely practical faith, which is able to be confirmed by naturalistic evidence. This practicality is one reason why the Bible is so successful in providing comfort and understanding when tragedy strikes.

However, there is zero understanding, and zero comfort that can be given if one is going to counsel the grieving mother by explaining that the child and she had dominion over that snake. Obviously, the dominion, will, and force of the snake was imposed by the snake upon the child, regardless of the will, rule, authority, or dominion of any human in that house. To believe in the dominion mandate of Adam, not only doesn't work, but is an attack and an affront to reason when faced with reality.

A leopard seal killed a snorkeling scientist, as reported on August 6, 2003 by National Geographic News,

The death of a British marine biologist in Antarctica last month [July 22] is thought to be the first human fatality caused by a leopard seal (*Hydrurga leptonyx*). But scientists fear further seal attacks as the number of people working in the region continues to rise.

Kirsty Brown was dragged underwater by the seal while snorkeling near Rothera research station on the Antarctic Peninsula.

Horrorified colleagues from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) scrambled a rescue boat and managed to pull Brown from the water. Despite trying to resuscitate her for an hour, the station doctor was unable to save the 28-year-old (Owen 2003).

A large problem is that many theologians and biblical apologists are carefully insulated behind the non-biting pages of books, and the non-lethal pixels of



computer screens. They have become solely document explorers. This separation and isolation from true wilderness, and the animals that inhabit it, creates a situation where people have their perceptions hijacked by the conceptual without ever engaging the reality of the natural.

Many, who promote the dominion mandate, seem to be naïve to the extraordinary fact, that when humanity does encounter creatures in the wild, it can become a precarious situation for the humans. The leopard seal acknowledged no respect for the scientist and the scientist was unable to exert any dominion over the animal. The evidence shows that the human encroached on the territory of the animal, and the animal killed the human. This certainly does not demonstrate that mankind has a dominion over the animal kingdom. It demonstrates that whoever or whatever has the upper hand can come out on top. The idea that man kept Adam's dominion simply does not work when the evidence is weighed.

Even man's best friend can become a dangerous threat. KFBB of Montana, reported that:

A three year old, bit in the face by a dog, thankfully will make a full recovery. This isn't an uncommon situation. Dogs are animals and while they can be the best of pets, they can be dangerous (Ousley 2012).

So even the most trusted of all animals can turn on people. This certainly does not demonstrate a dominion over the animal kind.

Furthermore, every pet must be trained through violence in some degree to recognize the wishes of man. It is not a true dominion. And without demonstrating consequences regularly, any obedience will dissipate. Any animal expert will also tell you to never fully trust an animal. But, if one cannot fully trust a subject, is that entity truly subjected? The answer is no.

The *Calgary Sun* reported that a young girl was able to survive a cougar attack because the father was able to rescue her.

A six-year-old girl was walking on a trail in the Barrier Lake day-use area of Bow Valley Provincial Park Sunday evening about 85km west of Calgary with her mother, father and nine-year-old brother when a cougar leaped from the trees on the side of the path.

"The girl's father, who was walking in front of her, heard the commotion and turned around to find the cat attacking his daughter", said Glenn Naylor, district conservation officer with Alberta Parks in Canmore.

"He yelled and tried to scare it off by throwing a water bottle."

The cat — a male less than two years old and weighing about 36kg—retreated, leaving the girl with minor cuts and puncture wounds.

"I think they were lucky that she was close by her father, that he reacted the way he did and that it was a small cat," said Naylor, noting many cougar attacks are on children because of their size (McMurray 2011).

These attacks are not consistent with the claim that man has dominion. The evidence suggests that nature is at odds with man and that animals do not respect a dominion of man.

An adult man on Vancouver Island had to escape an attack by a hungry cougar according to the *Huffington Post*:

Fearing for his life, a 38-year-old Vancouver Island man says he ran from the fangs and claws of a ravenous cougar and scaled a hefty piece of construction equipment in a desperate bid to escape.

With his pants shredded by the cougar's jaws and a shoe lost along the way thanks to a swipe from the animal's claws, John Frank Jr. said he climbed a locked-up excavator's boom and called for help on his radio.

The community of Ahousat, B.C., located north of Tofino, B.C., on the island's west coast, responded to Tuesday's attack, with some residents arriving on scene in their trucks, scaring the cougar away.

"I was attacked. There's no two ways about it," Frank told The Canadian Press in an interview on Wednesday. "The cougar wanted to eat me as a meal" (Drews 2012).

Those who have dominion do not usually have to climb construction equipment to escape those they have dominion over. Nor do those who are under the dominion of another try to eat that authority figure.

*The Wall Street Journal* reported that in February of 2010, a killer whale killed Sea World trainer Dawn Brancheau during a live performance. The orca dragged her into the water by her ponytail, which caused her to be scalped, and then after a combination of blunt force trauma's and drowning, the patrons witnessed that trainer die (Last 2012).

The victim, Brancheau did not have dominion over the orca. Therefore, the dominion of Adam has failed.

Some orcas have been domesticated to a point where they remain in captivity and can even be used in shows for paying customers. However, there are times when no amount of training can stop an otherwise domesticated whale from killing its caretaker.

Therefore, the cooperation of the killer whale is highly conditional, and obviously, mankind has yet to abide by all of those conditions that killer whales require of us. For when the conditions are not present, as determined solely by the orca, people can die. It is important to note the orca participation must be coerced, man cannot force the participation, and ultimately, the conditions are either acceptable to the

orca, or not. It is not the other way around, which the Adamic mandate would suggest.

Even non-carnivorous animals that are in a pattern of being cared for, and are, to all intents and purposes, domesticated so that they can serve a use to humanity, can be lethal without warning. At Select Sires, one of the premier Bovine facilities in the world, a young man was crushed to death by a bull. *The Columbus Dispatch* reported,

A 24-year-old man died yesterday after he was crushed by a bull at a farm near Plain City in Union County. William “Logan” Krebehenne, of Richwood, was pronounced dead at 3:09 p.m. at Dublin Methodist Hospital following the incident, the sheriff’s office announced this morning (Ludlow 2012).

The attack was completely unprovoked. It was simply a case of a large animal inexplicably turning on its caretaker and killing him without warning.

In Nepal, *CNN* reported that a frightened district has put up a reward for a leopard that has identified humans as the prey of choice.

A ferocious leopard may have killed 15 people in Nepal in a 15-month span, its latest victim a 4-year-old boy that the creature dragged away into the jungle to eat.

The head of boy was found in the forest a kilometer from his home Saturday morning, said Kamal Prasad Kharel, the police chief of the Baitadi district, an area about 600 kilometers (373 miles) west of Kathmandu.

The grisly discovery, which came after teams of people searched for the child, marks the 15th victim in the past 15 months in that remote district in western Nepal (Shrestha 2012).

The theological doctrine of man having dominion over the animal kind is having no impact on the leopard feeding on them who supposedly have the dominion. Man’s world of theology needs to wake up to reality.

A young boy was killed at the Pittsburgh Zoo when he fell into an African wild dog exhibit.

A group of African painted dogs killed a boy who fell into their exhibit today at the Pittsburgh Zoo.

Barbara Baker, the zoo’s president, said the child was around 3 years old.

He “fell off an observation deck that’s about 14 feet above the exhibit,” she said, “and was killed by the dogs.”

“Our emergency teams and our Pittsburgh police responded immediately, but there wasn’t anything that could be done,” added Baker.

The boy fell into the enclosure at 11:45 a.m., and visitors quickly alerted staff, the zoo said in a statement. A zookeeper moved seven of the 11 dogs out of the exhibit, and a Veterinarian Department member shot darts trying to scare away the remaining dogs.

“Unfortunately, the dogs were in pack mentality and not responding,” the zoo said (Anonymous 2012b).

Even in captivity, when well fed, these dogs recognized nothing but a meal and did not respond to the humans when they were attacking the victim. It is untenable to think that this boy, or any zoo employee, had dominion over these creatures. This is another tragic situation where the animal kingdom showed its violent animosity against mankind. To think that mankind has kept the Adamic dominion is an incredulous notion.

It is in the real world, discussing real life and death situations, that the doctrine of the dominion mandate appears completely absurd at face value. In fact, the only way to argue for some sort of dominion over the animals, is to redefine what rule and authority is, much like old-earth creationists who have redefined the meaning of a day.

*Fox News* reported another notable incident:

A 24-year-old man was mauled to death Sunday morning while cleaning a grizzly bear enclosure at a wildlife casting agency in southwestern Montana, Gallatin County officials said.

The man was mauled by one or both of the captive-bred grizzly bears at the Animals of Montana facility north of Bozeman, Sheriff Brian Gootkin said.

The victim’s name wasn’t immediately released, but officials said he’s originally from Pennsylvania.

Chuck Watson, attorney for Animals of Montana’s owner, Troy Hyde, told the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle* the grizzly bear had to be put down in order to recover the victim. “It’s obviously a tragic situation, and I don’t think we’ll ever know exactly what happened,” Watson said (Anonymous 2012c).

The evidence demonstrates that beasts often kill man when man enters their domain. The evidence demonstrates that mankind and the animal kingdom are opponents and the one who gets the upper hand can have control over the situation as long as circumstances do not abruptly change.

*The Washington Post* reported that a violent bee attack left one dead and two injured.

A hiker died Monday after he was attacked by a swarm of bees and fell about 150 feet off a cliff at a popular recreation area in Phoenix, authorities said.... Two other hikers were airlifted out after each was stung about 300 times. Paramedics said both men were hospitalized in serious but stable condition and expected to recover.

Fire officials said the three men were attacked by bees about 3:45 p.m. on a trail near Ice Box Canyon. The two survivors hid in a small crevice to avoid the swarm until rescuers arrived.

Some of the rescue workers wore white protective suits to keep them from also being stung (Anonymous 2012d).

An unbiased mind would never come to the conclusion that the dead man at the bottom of the canyon, and the two men hiding in the crevice, had dominion over the bees attacking them. Neither could the unbiased individual think that the rescuers had dominion, for they were wearing protective gear precisely so they could survive an attack from the bees.

It is a safe assumption that the majority of the unruly bees escaped from being punished by the humans for their act of insurrection. Then, if this is true, it would prove that the humans were firstly, powerless to enforce their dominion by evidence that they were attacked, and secondly, they are shown to be hopelessly powerless to punish the offenders after the act. If governance is incapable of prevention, and then is shown to be incapable of punishment, then it is not governance, and no dominion of any kind can be shown. This Adamic dominion mandate is simply not demonstrable when the naturalistic evidence is taken seriously.

But what does this position of a defunct Adamic dominion do with James 3:7 which states:

For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind.

Yes, every kind can be. But this does not translate to every one of every kind. Some orcas have been used successfully in shows at Sea World. Others, as we have seen, have killed their trainers.

Some tigers have been trained for shows and have performed well. Another tiger seized his trainer by the head and neck and dragged him off stage (Anonymous 2003). That tiger opted to exhibit its dominion over the man.

Painful facts still remain facts, even if theologians and apologists don't like them. Mankind must deal with the fact that things will happen that man, acting in the natural, cannot prevent regardless of their strongest will or wish. Nothing about these situations demonstrates dominion. What is demonstrated is that mankind must build up defenses of all kinds for the precise reason that we do not have dominion. Simply put, there is no recognition of our dominion by the animal kingdom and a king without subjects is only a king in their own mind.

Also, one should not confuse having dominion with being on top of the food chain, either. Dominion is rule and reign. Humanity is certainly on top of the food chain under most circumstances, but in some cases, animals eat man.

Therefore, since nature indicates a lack of recognition of man's dominion both in environmental occurrences (floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes) and in animals (at odds with creatures), then how does this observed evidence

square with Adam being given dominion over nature in Genesis 1?

### Was Dominion Relinquished?

A simple question that can be asked is—is there an event, which occurred that could have taken dominion over creation away from Adam, and subsequently, mankind?

There is a catastrophic event in Genesis 3:6 when Adam disobeyed the instruction of the Lord and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The Bible instructs that through Adam's disobedience that death came to all creation, man and nature (Romans 5:12, 8:20–21).

The Bible also instructs the way creatures interact with man drastically changed, for God put the fear of humans within the animals after the Flood (Genesis 9:2). Therefore, any spirit of obedience to man the animals did have is now altered by God. Therefore, man's rule of the animal kingdom is fundamentally changed from what it was in a pre-Fall format and God is the one who changed it (as a consequence to Adam's sin).

It should be noted this change is what is seen today. Most animals are afraid of humans, and out of fear we see fight or flight. Another change in man and animal interaction from before the Fall is that animals are now allowed to be used by man for food (Genesis 9:3). Therefore, animals are given into man's hand as prey to the predator.

It is clearly seen that man's relationship over the creatures is not dominion over loyal subjects. Rather animals are prey, and they often flee from man who is the predator and fleeing is a telltale sign of not obeying the pursuer. Yet sometimes, as cited in this article, the animals exhibit lethal dominion over man, which flatly contradicts the idea that man has dominion over animals.

But, as one can see, our observed lack of dominion over the animal kind is confirming to the biblical narrative. The Bible gives us a history of the relationship between man and animal. In the beginning, man had dominion and harmony with the animal kind and all of nature. Neither man nor animal viewed the other as predator or prey and Adam was given the mantle of being ruler over the Creation. Then, the biblical history explains how that changed due to Adam's sin. Ultimately, God, Himself, significantly changed the relationship between man and all of creation.

To deny that man's dominion was lost, is to deny Scripture, the effects of the sinful Fall, and the observed evidence of man and animal interaction today. The only place the Adamic Dominion can find support is within the pride of man, for evidence of it being extant is absent absolutely everywhere else.

### Can the Original Dominion be Redefined?

Some have taken the opportunity to redefine what the Adamic dominion implied. As an example: is there now a moral dominion that man must preside over as one reviewer suggested? This should go without stating, but the dominion in Genesis states nothing about a moral dominion in the context of where the conceptual dominion mandate comes from.

But, if we are free to start inventing dominions, one supposes we could create a moral dominion for man to reside over. But, how could mankind be trusted with a moral dominion after the Fall, when Adam was unable to be trusted with a piece of fruit before it while all of his morality was still intact?

Making things up is never the answer to solving biblical questions. Sticking to the simple language in the divinely inspired text is where the answers reside.

And according to Psalm 14:2–3

The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is none who does good, no, not one.

It does not appear the Lord puts any stock in man being able to maintain a moral dominion. Furthermore, the rest of the biblical narrative provides a Savior precisely because mankind is incapable of having a successful moral dominion.

Redefining what the original dominion means may be acceptable in theological circles, but it should not be accepted in biblical circles.

### According to most Theologians, Man has Dominion(s).

#### But, does the Bible Actually Teach Something Different?

Does the Bible give us any indication that something else, other than mankind, may have dominion over the earth?

This is the key to the discussion. Are we willing to take in the whole counsel of the written Word of God, or do we simply stop reading after Genesis chapter 2 irrespective of what happens next?

First of all, the Bible clearly teaches that man does not have a dominion over creatures on earth after the Fall.

The Leviathan was a creature used as a teaching tool to Job, by God, as an instrument to demonstrate that it would not submit to man (Job 41:1–8). Likewise, the behemoth in Job 40:24, God issued the challenge to try to pierce the nose of the behemoth, with a snare, which is the technique used to try to control big beasts like oxen and such.

Clearly, mankind had no rule over these creatures who were used as examples by God, Himself, to

demonstrate to Job that Job did not have control, right, or might over his environment—all of the things that a dominion would imply. Furthermore, one would find it difficult arguing with Job that he had dominion over anything at all. The appointed Adamic dominion simply fails to be seen in the post-Fall biblical environment as described in the book of Job.

According to Ephesians 2:1–3, sinful man is following someone else, which implies an obedience to, or a dominion under another.

And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Here we learn unrepentant man is following another who is the prince of the power of the air. Revelation 2:13 goes deeper into this prince.

I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne is. And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas was My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells.

This is a fascinating passage because this is Messiah speaking to John. And Messiah is mentioning the throne of Satan. A throne certainly is consistent with having some sort of dominion, which is consistent with Satan being called the prince of the power of the air in the passage in Ephesians 2:1–3. We also see the throne of Satan is spoken of as if on earth. It then follows that where one has a throne, one has a measure of dominion and this is consistent with what we learn in Job 1:7 that Satan roams around on the earth.

This idea of Satan having a dominion or an authority on earth is further developed in other passages. There is an enlightening interchange between Messiah and Satan recorded in Matthew 4:8–10:

Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'"

Satan presents himself to Messiah as the authority of earth, and the one who had authority to give to Messiah the kingdoms of the world. Yeshua did not rebuke that claim by Satan. Rather, He rebuked the claim that anyone can be worshiped besides God. It was by this rebuke in which He did exercise authority over Satan (therefore Satan has no authority over the Lord, but rather over that which has fallen).



Satan having a throne and presenting himself as one having authority on earth are confirming accounts of an implied dominion of Satan. This claim to earthly things by Satan is seen again in the book of Jude when Satan is disputing with the archangel Michael over the body of Moses (Jude 1:9). Of course, Michael rebuked Satan in the name of the Lord and that ceased the discourse.

Therefore, we do see God the Father exercising supreme authority, but one cannot deny that there was a claim of authority that Satan believed he had over the fallen. It was one that even our Messiah did not directly rebuke at the time (though He rebuked Satan's request to be worshiped).

This idea of Satan having dominion on earth is seen again when Paul wrote of how man can be delivered from Satan's domain via the redemption offered through Messiah in Colossians 1:13–14:

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

So clearly, the dominion, which was active on earth, was one of darkness and one of death by the time Messiah arrived. And we know that death is the last enemy to be destroyed (1 Corinthians 15:26), and Messiah came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8), which is sin and consequently death.

It then follows that earth, which is under the domain of sin and death was therefore under some kind of domain of Satan. This is consistent with Satan having a throne on earth and Satan believing he had the authority to offer the kingdoms of the world to Messiah during the period of temptation. However, the Bible is clear that Satan cannot move outside of the will of God (Job 1:12).

However, this occurrence still does no good to man's own claim of a dominion mandate for ourselves. Man's dominion is noticeably absent in these post-Fall discussions of dominion, powers, death, and sin.

After the Fall, the battle is between the dominion of darkness and then the dominion of Messiah. In the New Covenant Scriptures we clearly see the developed theme of Adam's dominion being lost to sin, death, and darkness by Adam at the Fall, and then Messiah (the last Adam) restoring what was lost and establishing an eternal dominion and kingdom that cannot fail.

The biblical narrative, from start to finish, certainly develops this concept and we see something happen to the dominion of darkness that was ushered in after the Fall. In the Scriptures, written in the post-resurrection time, there is a common theme that a dominion of Messiah has been established, for Ephesians 1:22–23 states that all things are put under the feet of Messiah.

And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

This occurred after Messiah was willfully subjected under the dominion of darkness and death before he was resurrected as is explained in Romans 6:9–11:

...knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

So the actual dominion that even Messiah was temporarily subjected to (via the cross) was sin and death. The Bible is also expressively clear that mankind is under this same dominion, but this changes when one is born again. Romans 6:14 explains:

For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The Bible, with redundancy, reinforces this point of Messiah having dominion. 1 Peter 4:11 states:

If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This passage teaches that it is the way of the believer to glorify the Lord with every thought, word and action. This demonstrates that the born again are in submission to another dominion, for all the believers' acts are done in the service of another not in the service of self, or in the service of furthering their own dominion or reign. And according to this passage in 1 Peter, it is Messiah to whom this dominion, in which the born again belong.

1 Peter continues in 5:10–11:

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

### **Messiah has Dominion**

It is a difficult notion to successfully argue, at this point, that man has dominion, when the Bible says Yeshua, the Messiah has dominion. It would be equally difficult to argue that God is mandating man to take dominion—for are we to wrestle it away from the Messiah He sent? Certainly not.

It certainly seems the biblical narrative teaches that God recognized Adam's failure to sustain a good dominion, and He gave it to His Son whom He knows will successfully do what Adam failed to do.

Furthermore, unsaved man is in enslaved to sin (Romans 6:6). This is to say sin has dominion and authority over unrepentant man.

The gospel is that Messiah frees the repentant sinner from this bondage and takes the born again out from the dominion of sin and darkness and places them in the kingdom and dominion of our Lord. John records that this domain of Messiah is forever established. Revelation 1:5–6 states:

...and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Yeshua's dominion is forever. It will never fail, it is firmly established and it will never be handed over to darkness and death like Adam's dominion. And those who are born again, have been removed from the former dominion of sin and placed into Messiah's dominion (Romans 6:14).

Therefore, apart from the Savior, it is not man's dominion which fallen man is under; it is the dominion of sin. Sin and death came from the Curse, which was the work of Satan in which Messiah came to destroy (1 John 3:8).

*As a point of clarification, this dominion of Messiah should not be misconstrued as endorsing amillennialism, or a preteryst theology. The literal 1,000 year reign is still to come.*

### Old Testament Displays of Power

The Old Testament is a foundational Scripture upon which all the New Testament is built. It is one that constructs precept upon precept, covenant upon covenant and looks forward to the completion and eternal fulfillment of the Torah and the prophets through Messiah's life, death, and resurrection. Once the fall of Adam was complete and man's greatness was lost, Scripture immediately began building toward the greatness of Messiah (Genesis 3:15).

Therefore, the various acts of power of the Old Testament prophets should not be misconstrued as Adam's dominion being displayed, for that is defunct, but rather miraculous acts are precursors to and for the coming Messiah and His dominion.

Therefore, the Jewish Messiah was positioned from Genesis 3:15 forward, to be the Deliverer from the domain of sin and death (Romans 11:26) which Adam wrought. The plan of God was never aimed to reestablish Adam's dominion—man's dominion. Rather, it was to establish and sustain the preeminence of Messiah (Colossians 1:18) and His dominion forever and ever.

### An Opposing View of Dominion

In an article in the *Journal of Creation*, Andrew S. Kulikovsky argues that the dominion mandate was established by God, and that it was a commandment which is still enforced today.

Please note that Kulikovsky is only engaged here because he conveniently presented the exact opposite position to what is presented in this paper. Therefore, it is helpful for the reader to see an opposing view and to be able to go read the entire Kulikovsky article for a compare and contrast.

Kulikovsky argues that mankind rules over creation, and that creation exists for the benefit of man. He wrote:

As noted in a previous article, human beings are subject to God, while the rest of the creation is subject to mankind and exists for our benefit. In other words, God rules over mankind, who rules over the rest of creation. (cf. Psalm 8) (Kulikovsky 2012, p. 46).

But the Kulikovsky answer of man ruling over the Creation does not line up with the Bible. He references Psalm chapter 8 as a proof text, but he misunderstands it. Psalm 8:6 states:

You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,...

This passage is not about mankind; it is referring to the coming Jewish Messiah. This is confirmed by Rabbi Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:27 when he quotes Psalm 8:6 when he is speaking of the Messiah and the dominion that He has. Paul wrote:

For "He has put all things under His feet..."

In fact, in the book of Job, God, Himself went through great lengths to point out how man does not rule over creation:

Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook,  
Or snare his tongue with a line which you lower?  
Can you put a reed through his nose,  
Or pierce his jaw with a hook?  
Will he make many supplications to you?  
Will he speak softly to you?  
Will he make a covenant with you?  
Will you take him as a servant forever? (Job 41:1–4)  
Lay your hand on him;  
Remember the battle—  
Never do it again! (Job 41:8)

The entire point the Lord made to Job is that man is wholly impotent to rule this creature, even while using extreme force. The Lord tells Job, that the very thing Kulikovsky is arguing for, is the very thing man is powerless to do. It is evident that sin fundamentally changed the dominion relationship between man and beast and man no longer rules over the beast.

### Was Creation "Very Good?"

Kulikovsky argues that in the beginning, before the Fall of Adam, that there was a rebellious tendency to the Creation itself. He argues that having dominion over the Creation meant that Adam was commanded by God, to be aggressive and conquer a less than willing original creation.

He is pulling this concept from the micro-analysis of both *kâbash* (subdue) and *râdâh* (dominion) in the Genesis 1:28 passage which states:

“... Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue (*kâbash*) it, have dominion (*râdâh*) over...”

The definitions of *kâbash* and *râdâh* do contain coercive, forceful elements. Meaning, the language implied that Adam could, by sheer force implement his will on all of his subjects through aggressive domination. And because Adam had this ability, Kulikovsky concludes that the “very good” Creation must have been obstinate and uncooperative from the beginning.

He cites the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* as the authority to confirm this accusation of the Lord’s work.

*Kabas* assumes that the party being subdued is *hostile to the subduer* [emphasis added], necessitating some sort of coercion if the subduing is to take place... Therefore “subdue” in Genesis 1:28 implies that creation will not do man’s bidding gladly or easily and that man must now bring creation into submission by main strength (Harris, Archer, and Waltke 1980, p.430).

Kulikovsky clearly indicates, by using this commentary as a proof text, that the Creation was hardwired, from the beginning, to resist the dominion of Adam. One should note, that it the Creation was originally hostile to Adam, then it would have been dangerous to Adam. For, hostility does not exist without the threat of danger.

Furthermore, the commentary he stakes his argument on makes it abundantly clear that this hostility was present in Genesis 1:28, which is before the Fall.

Kulikovsky then cites, two other sources of his choosing, which he believes echo a similar point: Koehler et al. (1994–2000) and VanGemenen (1997).

He then fleshes out this concept of a resistant creation and what it inherently means. Due to his belief that the original creation was hostile to Adam, these scenarios that Kulikovsky lays out would have been applicable before the Fall with his view (which is shared by many theologians, may I add).

What is in view here is for humanity to manipulate the created order so that it better serves our needs and purposes (Kulikovsky 2012, p. 45).

Exercising human dominion would imply working hard ground by breaking it up, aerating the soil in order to allow seed germination, and adding fertilizers (Kulikovsky 2012, p. 45).

Therefore, exercising dominion implies that we force the water to flow to places where it would not normally flow. This could be achieved by digging irrigation trenches or using a mechanism to pump the water though [*sic*] pipes to the required destination

(Kulikovsky 2012, p. 45).

It should be noted that it is a mainstay of the young-earth creation model, that all such struggle with nature was a result of the Fall. This bizarre stance of Kulikovsky finds itself an eager bedfellow with Hugh Ross’s ideas that the result of sin wasn’t really that drastic. Even more alarming is that it places survival of the fittest before the Fall, for hostility is not hostility if it does not end with one will surviving the opposition of another.

By Kulikovsky positioning creation as being initially hostile to Adam, he argues, perhaps unwittingly, that the original very good creation was actually in need of improvement (digging drainage ditches). Such a low view of God’s creation, and its ability to not completely provide for Adam’s needs is alarming. For it lessens the sin of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because Adam may have argued he ate out of need, and not out of selfishness. This could place the fault at God’s hands for not providing a suitable environment for Adam that allowed for perfect obedience.

Furthermore, Kulikovsky’s idea that the original dominion implied the instruction to dig irrigation trenches, develop mechanisms to pump water onto unproductive, hard soils needing fertilization flies in the face of what we learn happens in Genesis 3:19, where only then, after sin, did the need to farm by the “sweat of the brow” become a reality.

Therefore, Kulikovsky’s conclusions, no matter how sound he thinks his exegesis of the Hebrew words are, and no matter how many people he gets to confirm his starting position, land him in a thorny theological place. For Kulikovsky’s outcomes are disastrous for the biblical model of a very good God, and very good creation.

A quick use of logic would have saved Kulikovsky and his theological brethren from making the poor conclusion that hostility was present before the Fall.

Yes, it is true that the Hebrew words for dominion and subdue give the ability to enforce. However, to be given a power to rule does not imply that which is to be ruled to be unruly. To be given the power to control does not mean that, which is to be controlled, has a predisposition to be uncontrollable.

As an example, one could give the instruction to an artist to shape an object through force, manipulation, and coercion to the desired outcome of the artist. The instruction implies that the artist has every right to force upon the object any desire the artist so wishes. The artist has the right of both *kâbash* (subdue) and *râdâh* (dominion) over the object in which the artist is shaping.

But the amount and intensity of the force that is necessary is directly a result of the resistance of the object. A soft, pliable, pure, supple, moist lump of



clay, which responds to every motion of the potter would make the force needed minimal, and the effort to subdue nearly forgettable. Yet, force and coercion still exist, but the object responds willingly. Therefore, the force used is only one of volition, and not one of struggle. And the result is a harmony between the potter and the clay, and the ruler and the ruled. This type of harmony is what would have been in place between Adam and the Creation before the Fall.

Kulikovsky also argues that, in a post-Fall world, that ownership over something must mean control over something. Again, this is fallacious. One does not mean the other. Kulikovsky cites Psalm 115:6 that states the Creation was given to man (which happened in the pre-Fall Creation). From there he concludes, without considering any context of the Fall, that man has control over creation.

Again, one does not mean the other. If a donkey is given to a man it does not mean the donkey is going to walk whenever the man tugs the bridle (and if the donkey kicks its owner it would be the donkey that forces the owner to move). Just because this creation is the mortal home of man it does not mean that the home obeys man or that we can subdue it into not having tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, lightning strikes, and the like. It is obvious that the original sin of Adam changed man's control and dominion was forfeited.

The exegetical error that Kulikovsky committed was focusing on the smallest literary fragment while disregarding the pre-eminent context of life before the fall. In biblical studies one cannot dissect the smallest unit, without any regard to the whole, and then infer judgments on the whole and expect a sound outcome.

To be preoccupied with the smallest units of literary tradition may have its purposes; but the exercise is ultimately of limited value. A totality—things in combination—often possess properties and engenders qualities neither carried by nor necessarily inherent in any of its discrete components (Sarna 1989, p.xvi).

It is useful to offer a competing Hebraic commentary to the texts Kulikovsky offered. Note how the *JPS Torah Commentary* involves the context of not only the opening lines of Genesis, but understanding what the book of Genesis is, on a whole, and how that helps them understand properly the units. It even brings an understanding of the Messiah into the discussion.

*They shall rule* The verbs used here and in verse 28 express the coercive power of the monarch, consonant with explanation just given for “the image of God.” This power, however, cannot include the license to exploit nature banefully, for the following reasons: the

human race is not inherently sovereign, but enjoys its dominion solely by the grace of God. Furthermore, the model of kingship here presupposed is Israelite, according to which, the monarch does not possess unrestrained power and authority; the limits of his rule are carefully defined and circumscribed by divine law, so that the kingship is to be exercised with responsibility and is subject to accountability. Moreover, man, the sovereign of nature, is conceived at this stage to be functioning within the context of a “very good” world in which the interrelationships of organisms with their environment and with each other are entirely harmonious and mutually beneficial, an idyllic situation that is clearly illustrated in Isaiah's vision of the ideal future king (Isaiah 11:1–9) (Sarna 1989, pp.12–13).

Note the understanding that dominion and rule were products solely by the grace of God and one is accountable for that rule (and with accountability comes consequences). Also note how the very good Creation is in harmony with Adam, in every way, as opposed to Kulikovsky et al's assertions that the Creation would “not do man's bidding gladly” even before the Fall. Traditionally, the young-earth model lines up with this Jewish perspective of a very good creation.

Furthermore, *The JPS Torah Commentary*, though not messianic in a sense that Yeshua was and is the Jewish Messiah, rightly connects the kind of idyllic dominion granted to Adam to the dominion of Messiah, the last Adam. Isaiah 11:1–9 points to the redemption of mankind under the last Adam (a phrase revealed in the new covenant Scriptures 1 Corinthians 15:45), and foretells of a future authority that will have all dominion with an environment where the wolf dwells with the lamb, the leopard lies down with the young goat, and the calf is next to the lion. It is an environment where a child plays over the hole of a cobra and nothing shall be hostile. It is the environment where the child leads the lion and the calf together. The child exhibits true dominion that the creatures obey. That is the picture of what the original dominion, given to Adam would have been like. Yet, in today's world, that lion eats the child and the calf.

Clearly, without any hesitation, if a mind has not surrendered to peer pressure, everyone should easily recognize that Adam's dominion has failed and is defunct.

Ultimately, Kulikovsky's approach to man's dominion mirrors the original sin to exalt ourselves. It conveniently forgets that at the entrance of Adam's sin mankind went from makers of the law to those under a law, and from those who had grace to those who need grace. It is quite an incredulous conclusion to believe that those condemned under the law are the



ones with the dominion.

### **A Redeemed Dominion**

A deeper issue is this: does the dominion of Messiah, in whom those who are born again now belong, allow the believer to exercise the dominion of Messiah while still on earth?

The key is understanding from whom this dominion came. The original dominion given to Adam has ceased to exist and did not survive the great offense against God. Fallen man has no claim, stake, or power of dominion, for those condemned are enslaved to the dominion of death and darkness, as every believer once was.

However, for the born again, for those who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been redeemed into the perfection of Messiah, their citizenship is found in heaven (Philippians 3:20) and have become one body in Messiah (1 Corinthians 12:12). The born again have been given the birthright of being heirs with Him (Romans 8:17). This is a new dominion perfectly established through Yeshua.

The question can now arise; does this dominion translate now to the believer while still finishing the race in this fallen world?

The Bible confirms that it does, but there is a proviso the size of a mustard seed. This condition is faith, which is exercised within the will of God. Peter could walk on the water, with faith in Yeshua, which is trusting that Yeshua had rule/dominion over everything (Matthew 14:29–32). It was not by Peter's own dominion in which he walked upon the water; it was accomplished through Messiah. And when Peter's faith in Messiah failed, so did the walking on the water.

Therefore, Peter could not exercise his own dominion, but through faith, Yeshua could exercise His in Peter. This is confirmed in Matthew 17:19–20 in the well-known mustard seed comparison where faith could even enable dominion over mountains.

This new dominion is recorded in the gospel of Luke:

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name." And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:17–20).

Upon the return of the 70, we see astonishment that even demons are in subjection to them through the name of Yeshua. The Messiah answered them and said He had given them the authority to tread down upon serpents and scorpions (the natural world as well). The astonishment from the 70 came because

the people recognized they had no dominion over these things before, but through Messiah's name, a new dominion, a new authority was given which allowed them to tread down on the enemy and on things in the natural that would do harm to them.

Obviously, if the Adamic dominion was still intact, the Messiah would not have needed to give them the power, through His name, to exercise dominion. If the Adamic dominion was still intact, the 70 would not have been astonished that the demons were subjected to them. If the Adamic dominion was still intact, they would not have needed the new power, through Yeshua's name, to tread down upon serpents and scorpions.

Let us not forget that one of the definitions of *râdâh*, the word for dominion in Genesis, is to tread down upon nature. It is no mere coincidence that the Messiah, the last Adam, invoked similar language and it is no mere coincidence that the 70 made it known that this dominion came only through the name of Yeshua. This is messianic evidence, from the mouth of Yeshua, that any dominion of man now must be through the name of Messiah, and through His dominion.

### **Was Adam Responsible for a Moral Law of God before the Fall?**

Is it possible that Adam had other moral responsibilities that he was accountable for, like the keeping of the Sabbath, as it has been suggested to this author? This might seem like a fair question at face value, because in Genesis 2:3 we see the Lord blessing the Sabbath day and making it holy. However, there is not a responsibility to Adam for the keeping of the Sabbath, nor were there any other additional moral instructions, or law, in which he was responsible.

It is not proper exegesis to retrofit the Ten Commandments or the other *mitzvot* into the first two chapters of Genesis before the Fall. One must remember what the commandments of God revealed. The Apostle Paul, the Jewish Rabbi in the New Covenant Scriptures explained that through the law comes the knowledge of sin (Romans 3:20).

Yet, Adam and Eve, before Genesis 3:6, had no knowledge of sin, because they had not eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Therefore, there could not have been a so called "law of God" that went any further than the singular instruction to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because the known existence of a deeper moral law would have presupposed a knowledge of sin on Adam and Eve's part.

We must accept the plain reading of the text and surmise that the moral responsibility Adam had to God, in its totality before the Fall, was confined to one instruction: do not eat of the tree of the knowledge

of good and evil (Genesis 2:16). To assume further responsibility would assume a deeper law. To assume a deeper law would cause Adam and Eve to have a knowledge of sin, because Romans 3:20 states that "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Therefore, where there is no sin, there can be no Law.

Even more, if we apply further moral responsibilities to Adam, then we must account for penance for their failures, and that would have meant sacrifices, for a blood sacrifice is required for the forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22). And a blood sacrifice, occurring before the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is eaten from, is unthinkable within the biblical landscape.

### **Dominion and The Image of God**

A few have tried to combine the image of God and man's dominion into one idea. But, we must be careful not to allow beliefs about the image of God to overburden our understanding of man's dominion.

Schleiermacher speaks of the image as human domination over nature, a view expounded in more recent days by Hans Wolff and L. Verdium (Elwell 2009, p. 733).

Though the image of God and the dominion of man are related in some respects, they are not synonymous. Adam's dominion was an appointment to a position; whereas the image of God was a condition of man's creation. Therefore, this paper correctly treats the two separately and appropriately addresses dominion without needing to explain the image.

However, in saying that, if one believes a discussion on man's dominion cannot be had without a discussion on the image of God, then that person does not understand either. Let us not deceive ourselves on this matter. Many pastors, professors, and teachers speak of the image of God with a confidence as if they really know what it is. But too often that is a false bravado.

Unfortunately, Scripture never says in so many words what is meant by the highly intriguing term "the image of God" (Luter 2008, p. 247)

No matter how confident someone sounds when they are speaking of the image of God, the truth is most draw a blank on what really is the image of God. This is why Millard Erickson speaks of differing views and theories on the matter.

There are three general ways of viewing the nature of the image. Some consider the image to consist of certain characteristics within the very nature of the human, either physical or psychological/spiritual. This view we will call the substantive view of the image. Others regard the image not as something inherently or intrinsically present in humans, but as the experiencing of a relationship between the human and God, or between two or more humans. This is the relational view. Finally, some consider the image

to be, not something a human is or experiences, but something a human does. This is the functional view (Erickson 2009, p. 520).

Some respected texts simply state the Bible does not teach us what exactly is the Image of God.

Christian thinkers have tried to locate the image of God (*Imago Dei*) in various dimensions of man's being, including man's spirit, soul, rationality, will mind, personhood, immortality, and even his physical body. But Scripture is not specific as to exactly what it is about man that constitutes the image of God (Brand, Draper, Butler, and England 2003, pp. 806–807).

Because the image of God has been a source of such speculation, it is not a wise practice to use one's own view of the image of God to shape other important doctrines. It is best to take what is clear to understand the vague, rather than to take the vague to confuse the clear.

### **Conclusion**

There is biblical evidence that God fundamentally changed man's relationship with the animal kingdom after the Flood. There is biblical evidence that nature was changed after the Fall in Genesis 3:17 that made nature an obstacle to man. There is naturalistic evidence that nature is an obstacle to man. There is naturalistic evidence that the animal kingdom does not recognize man's authority or dominion. There is biblical evidence that animals do not recognize any dominion of man. There is biblical evidence that sin and death have dominion in the fallen world. There is naturalistic evidence that everything in nature dies even when opposed to the wish of man. There is biblical evidence that Satan has a throne, claims authority, and sin and death are connected to his works.

There is biblical evidence that this dominion of death is ultimately defeated by the dominion of Messiah, which was established by God. There is biblical evidence that those who become born again are then transferred from the dominion of sin and death into the dominion of Messiah, and forego the judgment of wrath. So inclusion into the dominion of Messiah is what relieves all the previous powers, dominions, and judgments that fallen man was subjected to.

There is biblical evidence that through the name of Messiah, and through His dominion, both the natural and the supernatural are in subjection to redeemed man when there is faith. There is biblical evidence that in the Messianic kingdom to follow that the child shall lead the lion, and a fattened calf, demonstrating the animal kind recognizing the child's dominion, through the Messiah. There is naturalistic evidence that in the current life a child is killed by such predators and disobeyed by calves, thereby refuting the idea of the child having a dominion over the

animal kingdom in this life.

The biblical sequence of dominion then is as follows:

Adam was given dominion over the animal kind and creation. He then forfeited that dominion to Satan, sin and death, which is also called the dominion of darkness. This happened when Adam disobeyed the command of God to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Due to Adam's sin, God changed man's relationship with nature and animals so that neither animals, nor nature, recognize fallen man's dominion.

Messiah then came and claimed victory over the dominion of death and sin and God placed everything under the feet of the Lord the Messiah who demonstrated dominion over nature and animals. Then, when one is born again, they are transferred from the dominion of death, into the dominion of the Messiah. The born again is never to establish their own dominion, nor can they, but they serve the dominion of Messiah forever and ever.

It is possible, through faith, to operate within the dominion of Yeshua for the born again believer. However, the unrepentant sinner has no dominion, rule, or authority of their own, and remains in bondage to the domain of darkness, which controls their lives and destiny.

This understanding of dominion, as laid out in this paper, rings in perfect harmony with the gospel. For all are lost under the curse of sin. Then, through Messiah alone, are all redeemed. The preeminence of Messiah is supreme.

Therefore, the dominion mandate, which states that all mankind has a standing command or order to have dominion over the earth, due to the dominion granted to Adam, is not a biblically supported idea.

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