

The Dominion Mandate: Blessed to Fill, Commissioned to Rule

Dr. John Carmichael

[Gen 1:27-28 NASB95] 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- We are not victims but victors.
- Genesis 1:28 is not an add-on to creation; it is the job description for image-bearers.
- God's pattern is clear: He blesses first (capacity), then He speaks (commission), then He gives verbs that require movement.
- The mandate is corporate (plural imperatives). This is humanity's shared vocation, not a private platform for control.

Why is Genesis 1:28 so important for believers today, especially Pentecostal believers who care about Spirit-empowered living?

Here are four reasons why this is important.

I. Blessing is empowerment, and God's voice sets the assignment.

- a. Genesis begins this mandate with "God blessed... and God said." The NET emphasizes that "blessed" here means God endowed them with capacity for what follows.
- b. In other words: the command is not issued to the unempowered; blessing supplies capacity for obedience.
- c. The LXX uses εὐλογέω (eulogeō) for "bless": a word that can carry the sense of conferring benefit, not just speaking nice words. God's commission also rides on speech (λέγω), reinforcing that dominion is tethered to God's Word, not human ambition.
- d. The Word contains the ability to produce. [Isa 55:11 NASB95] 11 So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding [in the matter] for which I sent it.
- e. Application: If you want Genesis 1:28 to become more than a slogan, don't start with "I'm going to take territory." Start with receiving God's empowerment and submitting to God's voice. Pray until the Spirit puts steel in your spine and clarity in your mouth.
- f. God's blessing is not a trophy, it's fuel. **God's blessing is capacity, not flattery. He empowers what He commands.**

II. Fruitfulness defines godly dominion before confrontation ever begins.

- a. The mandate begins with life-language: "be fruitful" and "multiply." These imperatives are not passive. They are commands for productive life.
- b. Fruitfulness (pārāh) can be literal and broader (productive increase), and multiplication (rābâ) amplifies that increase.
- c. Greek/LXX: αὐξάνω (auxanō) emphasizes growth, and πληθύνω (plēthynō) emphasizes increase in number. Together they paint dominion as life expanding outward.
- d. [Psa 8:4-8 NASB95] 4 What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! 6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen, And also the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

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- e. Psalm 8 reads Genesis 1 through worship: God made humanity to rule over the works of His hands and placed everything under their feet. Dominion is meant to be exercised as worshipful stewardship under God, not autonomous control.
- f. Application: Don't reduce dominion to ONLY "rebuking devils" while your life produces no fruit. In Scripture, dominion starts with Spirit-enabled fruitfulness: holy character, healthy family culture, faithful work, generous stewardship, and disciple-making outcomes.
- g. If dominion is real, it should show up as fruit. Dominion starts with fruitfulness. **Before you confront devils, confront barrenness.**

III. God's mission is filling the earth, your calling has geography.

- a. "Fill the earth" is not only about population; it's about presence and stewardship spreading outward. The Hebrew for "earth/land/ground" ('ereṣ) is concrete. This mandate is embodied and public.
- b. And "fill" (mālā') can also mean fulfill/complete. This is suggesting God's intention is that His purposes come to completion through image-bearers living out His rule in the real world.
- c. The LXX uses πληρώ (plēroō) for fill/fulfill and γῆ (gē) for earth/land is language that later echoes in mission expansion ("ends of the earth").
- d. [Act 1:8 NASB95] 8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."
- e. Jesus promises Spirit power (δύναμις) and then defines the outcome: "you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 defines Pentecostal dominion: power for witness, not power for ego.
- f. [Eph 2:6 NASB95] 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus,
- g. Believers are "raised up" and "seated" with Christ in the heavenly places. That seating is not escapism; it is positional authority for faithful mission; an "above" posture that empowers "into the earth" obedience. Jesus has all authority, and He shares it so we don't beg darkness, we enforce the victory of Christ.
- h. Application: **Pray like you are seated, then live like you are sent.** The Spirit-filled life is not confined to the altar; it spills into streets, workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, and nations.
- i. The Spirit doesn't just fill you. He sends you to help fill the earth.

IV. "Subdue" and "rule" require Christ-centered authority with ethical guardrails.

- a. Here's where dominion theology either becomes biblical or becomes dangerous. The Hebrew kābaš can mean enslave or conquer in other contexts, but the NET argues those harsh senses don't fit Genesis 1; here it means bringing creation under wise human control; harnessing potential through cultivation, building, and stewardship.
- b. The verb rādā means rule/have dominion, but the Torah itself forbids ruling with ruthlessness (Lev 25:43), proving Scripture anticipates misuse and commands restraint under the fear of God.
- c. The LXX renders kābaš with κατακυριεύω (katakurieuō), a verb the New Testament uses for oppressive "lording it over" that Jesus explicitly rejects as a leadership model (Mark 10:42; cf. Matt 20:25). **Subdue the earth's chaos, but never 'lord it over' people.**
- d. That's a built-in warning from the Greek tradition: dominion over creation must never mutate into domination over people.

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- e. Matthew 28:18: Jesus says all authority (ἐξουσία, exousia) in heaven and on earth has been given to Him; dominion theology becomes Christ-centered before it becomes self-centered.
 - f. Luke 10:19: Jesus gives disciples authority (exousia) over “all the power” (dynamis) of the enemy. Jurisdiction outranking raw force.
 - g. Luke 4:6: the devil claims authority has been “handed over” to him. Dominion is contested, and Jesus refuses satanic shortcuts.
 - h. Mark 16:17: signs (deliverance, tongues, etc.) are listed as accompanying believers; preach this in harmony with Luke–Acts’ broader pattern of word + power. Power for the Gospel to help people.
 - i. Application: Act like the book of Acts: confront demonic oppression, pray for the sick, proclaim the gospel with boldness, and live holy while refusing manipulative control tactics in leadership, marriage, parenting, or politics.
 - j. We don’t take dominion by controlling people; we exercise dominion by obeying Christ and confronting darkness.
- **God blesses and commissions His people to multiply His life across the earth and to exercise delegated dominion under His character, fulfilled and empowered through Christ and the Holy Spirit.**
 - Genesis 1:28 isn’t merely about what humans can do; it’s about what God intends humans to be: blessed image-bearers who fill the earth with God-reflecting life and exercise delegated authority responsibly. The New Testament does not cancel that mandate; it re-centers it in Jesus’ universal authority and empowers it through the Holy Spirit for witness.