

THE RULE OF MAN

“Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” (Gen. 1:26)

- There is no doubt that God intended man to rule on the earth. His dominion over creation is repeated in Gen. 1:28. **“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”**
- God also gave to man every seed bearing plant on the whole earth for food (Gen. 1:29). Man therefore also has dominion over plant life.
- Then God placed man in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it (Gen. 1:15).
- Note that man was working in a “garden” not a wilderness. God is orderly and not the Author of Confusion (I Cor. 14:33). Note also that God made trees that were “pleasing to the eye” (Gen. 2:9). Man, in God’s image, is interested in beauty and esthetics.
- Then God gave man the responsibility of naming all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air (Gen. 1:19, 20). In modern science this is known as “taxonomy”.
- As you know, God didn’t need man to rule over the earth, to dress and keep the garden, or to name all the animals and birds. Like a loving father trains a child, however, God was condescending to train man.
- Paul wrote to the Corinthians that **“We are God’s fellow workers” (1 Cor. 3:9)**. Sometimes God takes the lead and we help Him, as in evangelizing the world. Other times God allows us to initiate a work and He helps us. The writer of Hebrews quotes from the 118th Psalm: **“We say with confidence, the Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?” (Heb. 13:6)**.
- THERE WAS OBVIOUSLY A LIMIT TO MAN’S RULE UPON THE EARTH. LIKE AN OBEDIENT CHILD, MAN WAS ALWAYS REQUIRED TO OBEY HIS HEAVENLY FATHER!
- GOD WILL NOT TOLERATE REBELLION AND DISOBEDIENCE FROM ANYONE, WHETHER ANGELS OR MEN!
- The underlying evil in eating the forbidden fruit was to “be like God” (Gen. 3:5). God is a Jealous God and, as we have said, will not tolerate rebellion and disobedience!
- In this regard, Jesus is our perfect example. God gave Him all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18), yet He also always did what pleased His Father. Jesus said: **“The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone for I always do what pleases him” (Jn. 8:29)**.
- Note also that Jesus came as a “Servant” (Lk. 22:27). God intended man to rule over animals and birds, but not over his fellow man. This is the message that we have heard from the beginning that we should love one another and not be like Cain (1 Jn. 3:11, 12). Cain could rule over his garden, but not his brother!
- God hates the practice of the Nicolaitans (Rev. 2:6). The word comes from “nico” (victory) and “laos” (people). Thus the word literally means to rule over people. Paul warned the Ephesian elders years before that “savage wolves” would come among them and not spare the flock. Of their own number men would arise to “draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30). Man’s rule is to be over nature, not people!