

Dominion Restoration (Psalm 18; Numbers 24:2–9)

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Introduction

There is a very real war being waged in the unseen realm that is affecting all that has happened throughout history and is now happening in the world all around us with respect to God's original purpose for creation.

1. What is happening in the world today and how do these current events figure into this wider purpose of God in the world?
2. What impact is the church supposed to have in this war? Is the church to impact current events now, and what should that impact be?
3. What place do individual Christians play, and how does what they do relate to the church in this unseen but very real war?

We want to examine what Scripture has to say about this and then ask what we must do to adjust our lives accordingly.

I. The Setting

1. The Bible informs us that God's original plan for creature/man was to co-rule (to have dominion) with Him over all the earth. Psalm 8 delineates this purpose:
2. Before Adam, all sentient beings (the *heavenly beings* of Psalm 8) lived in the unseen realm, being vastly superior to anyone on earth.
 - a. The Bible states that there are three realms: (1) the unseen realm, (2) the heavens, and (3) the earth (the material realm). Note Ephesians 6:12:
“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, [3—in the earthly realm] against the cosmic powers over this present darkness [2—in the heavenly realm], against the spiritual forces of evil [1] in the heavenly places.”
 - 1) Psalm 8 declares that God made a being inferior to the heavenly beings but honored him by creating him in His image to have dominion over His created order (Genesis 1:26).
 - 2) It is likely this honor (image and dominion) caused the rebellion in heaven. Some of the heavenly beings did not want a material being to have authority over the creation.
 - 3) When the serpent tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, he was set on usurping this dominion authority for himself by getting Adam to sin against God and thereby suffer the penalty of death as threatened (Genesis 2:16, 17).
 - 4) God had other plans. Declaring war on the serpent and his offspring (Genesis 3:15), the strategy was to bring in another Adam to undo the damage of the first Adam.
- b. The last Adam, a God/man, would conquer the serpent by His death and resurrection, enabling restoration of the original dominion mandate (1 Corinthians 15:45–47; Colossians 1:15–19).

II. The Mechanics

Numbers 22 through 25 contains a fascinating story considering this principle of dominion restoration.

1. Balaam's third oracle reveals the plan to restore the dominion mandate.
 - a. The focus is on the tents of Israel but with a greater vision of *tabernacles*, where the Lord dwells with His people (vv. 5–7).
 - 1) The earthly tabernacle is patterned after the true tabernacle in heaven.

“The true tent that the Lord set up, not man” (Hebrews 8:2). This is a quote loosely taken from the middle of verse 6 of the oracle, which in the Septuagint reads: *“Like tents that the Lord has pitched.”*

- 2) These tabernacles are compared to the Garden of Eden with trees, gardens, and rivers (v. 6).
- 3) These tabernacles, like Eden, are the source of life-giving waters (v. 7; Ezekiel 47; Revelation 22:1, 2).
- b. The remainder of the oracle focuses on God’s purpose to redeem a people for His name (vv. 7b–9). Like the tents above, the “him” of these verses is Jacob but prophetically looks beyond Jacob to his greater Son, Jesus Christ.
 - 1) He is to be King of kings and Lord of lords.
 - 2) He is taken out of Egypt (Matthew 2:15, citing Hosea 11:1).
 - 3) He is honored and protected by His God.
 - 4) He is utterly victorious and rules the nations with a rod of iron.
 - 5) He fulfills the covenant that the Lord made with Abraham.
2. The fourth oracle (vv. 15–19) is the greatest Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament. Notice verse 19: *“And one from Jacob shall exercise dominion.”*
3. How does this relate to war?
 - a. Satan took dominion from Adam; Jesus is taking it back. He became victorious over Satan in His resurrection. Full restoration will not take place until all Christ’s redeemed are glorified (Revelation 5:9, 10).
 - b. Until then, Christ is reigning and reclaiming territory for God (1 Corinthians 15:25).
 - c. In every stage of redemptive history, reclaimed territory is marked by a temple (as noted in Balaam’s oracle).
 - 1) Eden was the original temple where God dwelt with mankind.
 - 2) Noah’s ark was a temple.
 - 3) The oaks of Mamre served as Abraham’s temple (Genesis 13:18; 18:1).
 - 4) The tabernacle was Israel’s temple (2 Chronicles 3:1).
 - 5) In this age the temple is not a building but a body, the Lord’s church (Matthew 16:18; Acts 7:44–48).

What Can We Take from This?

1. Why do you come to church? Do you understand that when the church assembles, it is a sacred temple and the assembled people are meeting with God and are to worship Him in spirit and in truth?
2. Do you understand how important you are in this kingdom/dominion work?
3. As the original mandate was to fill the earth and subdue it, the renewed temple-mandate is gospel-oriented.

In this age, we expand God’s dominion by taking the message of salvation to the ends of the earth, establishing temple/kingdoms (churches) throughout Satan’s domain.
4. Paul is the pattern for the gospel/dominion work in which all believers are to engage through the kingdom/temple church.

Jesus appointed Paul a minister of the gospel, sending him to the Gentiles *“to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God”* (Acts 26:16–18).

May 2019 find us faithful and obedient to this divine mandate (Matthew 28:18–20).