



**Title:** Created to Rule

**Text:** Genesis 1:26-28, 3:1-7; Revelation 5:1-10

**Connection to Unit Theme:** God created humanity to rule over the earth as vice-regents. Our reign was to be a reflection of the loving rule of God. As early as Genesis 3 we see that this good order is turned upside down. Fallen humanity tends to either abuse or abdicate power. Either way, we surrender our God-given dominion. In Jesus Christ, redeemed persons are reestablished as vice-regents.

### **Introduction Idea**

By its appearance alone you would think that Minecraft is an outdated game from the Atari era. Yet it has become one of the most popular video games ever since its release in 2009. By January of 2013, Minecraft had sold more than 20 million copies<sup>1</sup>. The concept of the game is also very simple. There are no specific tasks to accomplish. Players move about and interact in an entirely open world, building, foraging for food and supplies, and mining for minerals and elements. That's it. People spend hours upon hours playing the game. Why has this simple, graphically basic game become so popular? Perhaps because it, along with similar games like the SimCity franchise, has tapped into a common human desire.

God created humans to rule over creation, and so there is a creative longing within each person. We desire to build and rule over that which we create. Virtual worlds such as those in video games give players the ability to satisfy something of that longing. Yet, as often evidenced in these games we have used our God-given authority to serve our own purposes instead of reflecting God's loving rule. Jesus Christ, as the Ultimate Man, has regained the dominion we surrendered.

### **Sermon Division I – We have surrendered our God-given dominion (Gen. 1:26-28; 3:1-7)**

In his book *Dominion and Dynasty*, Stephen Dempster highlights the relationship between the rule of man and the image of God:

If the terms 'image' and 'likeness' stress the unique relationship humanity has to its Creator, they also indicate the exalted, regal role humanity plays in its natural environment. The male and female as king and queen of creation are to exercise rule over their dominion, the extent of which is the entire earth...Being made in the image of God signifies humans exercising dominion as God's vicegerents of creation<sup>2</sup>.

Dempster gets this from Genesis 1:26-28. There was a hierarchy evident in creation. God ruled over man, and man ruled over creation. That hierarchy was overturned in Genesis 3. From the moment that Eve listened to the serpent the reader knows something is wrong. She abdicates her authority over the serpent as Adam passively watches on the sidelines.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minecraft>

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 59.



From this moment forward everything is wrecked, including our dominion. We exercise our authority in less than God-honoring ways. We dominate those over whom we hold authority (Mark 10:42-45) or we passively abdicate our role as vice-regents, as did Adam.

Because sin turns us inward we always do what we think is best for us. If it is best to abdicate, we will choose that route. If it is best to dominate, we will pursue that course. This only works until we realize we live in a world filled with people just like us. Jesus is the only one who can rescue us from this sick cycle.

**Application:** Are you abdicating or dominating in the areas over which God has called you to be in authority? What does this teach us about our parenting, or our interactions in various relationships? We must repent of all Adam-like passivity and serpent-like usurping.

### **Sermon Division II – Christ reestablishes humanity's rightful reign (Rev. 5:1-10)**

Revelation 5 begins with weeping and ends with joyous worship. The reason for the weeping is that "no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or look into it." What is this scroll? It is the unfolding of history, God's plan of redemption, everything God will accomplish. To not open the scroll means that history has no point, no destination, and no climax.

But if someone can open this scroll, then redemption can take place. God will overturn the effects of the fall and humanity will once again live as we were originally intended - this time without the possibility of failure. The reason for joyous worship is because someone will open that scroll, namely "the Lion of the tribe of Judah." Because of this we see that He has, "made them a kingdom and priests to our God and they shall reign on the earth."

Weep no more, John (Rev. 5:4). Weep no more, church. The Lion has conquered. And we will reign with Him.

**Application:** The fact that Christ has conquered means something for the way we view history. Because Jesus is sovereign over history we are free to pursue bold mission. We know from Revelation 5 that there will be people "from every tribe and language and people and nation." Therefore, we must go because they will respond. Furthermore, this means something for the daily fears we face. If Jesus is sovereign, fear is ridiculous. We can be boldly creative as God has created us to be. We can joyously build as He created us to do.

### **Conclusion Idea**

You and I were not created to merely rule over a video game world. We were tasked with ruling over an actual, beautiful, God-centered world. Today we live in a world of brokenness and rebellion. We must bring the reign of heaven to earth.



John Piper sums it up well:

"God's great purpose for the world is, namely, to fill this world with his glory, by rooting out of his kingdom all sin and unbelief and filling it with [passionate] worshipers from every people, tongue, tribe, and nation. In the seed of Abraham, all families of the earth will be blessed. All the families of the nations will worship before the Lord<sup>3</sup>.

God will accomplish His purpose. Therefore, let us be both passionate worshippers and messengers of reconciliation so that more and more worshipers are brought into the fold.

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<sup>3</sup> From <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/conference-messages/prayer-the-work-of-missions>