

THE GREAT COMMISSION AS CREATIONAL RESTORATIVE COVENANT

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INTRODUCTION

The final chapter of each of the synoptic gospels records a version of what is known as the Great Commission - a command by Jesus to his followers to make disciples of all the nations of the world. This paper will explore the foundation for Jesus’ command to his disciples. An alternative phrase that better reflects the whole of the Biblical narrative will be offered. This new terminology will be rooted in the fact that the Great Commission finds its origins, not in the New Testament or the Abrahamic covenant, but in the creation account as recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis. It will be shown that the eternal purposes of God are clearly set forth in the creation account and that the unfolding of the Biblical revelation shows God’s active role in restoring the creational design norms¹ that were corrupted following the Fall. In light of this, the creation account serves as a foundation for interpreting not only the Great Commission, but all of Scripture.

GREAT COMMISSION AS RESTORATIVE

As previously mentioned, each of the synoptic gospels includes a form of what is generally referred to as the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16; Lk 24:44-49). The most often used and quoted is found Mt 28:18-20 where Jesus says,

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. (ESV)

Jesus’ commission to the apostles and the church is strong. His followers are to make disciples. They are to do this by going to the nations, baptizing, and teaching all that

¹ The term “design norm” is taken from Mark Kreitzer’s classnotes, unpublished.

Christ has commanded. Although this command seems clear enough to most evangelicals today, it has not always been understood in this way by conservative Protestants. Some throughout church history did not interpret Jesus' commission to the apostles as normative for their time. William Carey proved instrumental in changing this line of thought. With his publication of *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens* in 1792, Carey became one of the first in the English speaking world to lay out a Biblical foundation for the church's missionary mandate². In his work, Carey dealt solely with the aforementioned Matthew passage in laying out his argument. Although it is agreed that Carey's interpretation and argument from the passage is correct, he failed to provide an argument reflecting the grand narrative of the Scriptures. Carey even seems to suggest that without Christ's Commission there is no warrant for missions when he writes, "If the command of Christ to teach all nations be confined to the apostles, then all such ordinary ministers who have endeavoured to carry the gospel to the heathens, have acted without a warrant, and run before they were sent."³ Christopher Wright points out that Carey's shortcomings are continually displayed today by many who explore and argue for Biblical foundations for mission. Wright warns against using isolated passages in this way.

These texts may indeed sparkle, but simply laying out such gems on a string is not yet what one could call a missiological hermeneutic of the whole Bible itself. It does not even provide whole-Bible grounding for mission" (Wright 2006, 36).

Thus what is needed are not isolated proof texts that support the work of mission, but a comprehensive biblical theology that takes into consideration the whole of biblical revelation: God's creational design norms, the effects of the fall against those norms, and God's redemptive action to restore those norms as revealed in His Word.

The use of the term Great Commission fails in communicating the comprehensive message of Jesus' command in the Gospels. This is not to suggest that Jesus' words are not *great* or that they are not a *commission*. However, the use of the term, which arose after Carey's publication, has given rise to Mt 28:19-20 serving as a proof text for modern missions. The implications of using Mt 28:19-20 in this way is that if the passage was taken out of the Bible the whole foundation for missions would come crumbling down. The term *great* suggests that the command is supreme to other commands in Scripture. However, Christ has reserved that usage for a different command (Mt 22:34-38). In addition to this, the usage of Great Commission conveys a disconnect from the rest of the biblical narrative as it fails to communicate the ultimate purpose of the

² Wright, Christopher J.H., *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative*, (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Academic, 2006), 36.

³ http://www.reformedreader.org/rbb/carey/an_enquiry_into_the_obligation_o.htm

commission in light of the whole of scripture - a purpose that points to the restoration of creational design norms.

Those who seek to take into account the Great Commission in the context of the entire Bible, often find the foundational roots of Jesus' command in the Abrahamic blessing and covenant that is first recorded in Gn 12:1-3. Walter Kaiser writes that the Abrahamic covenant "is foundational to the missionary vision of the whole Bible and the people of God through all the ages."⁴ In addition Wright refers to Gn 12:1-3 as "the original great commission"⁵ and "the biblical foundation on which the text in Matthew [Great Commission] is based."⁶ The connection Kaiser and Wright make between the Abrahamic covenant and the Great Commission is not wrong. It simply fails to recognize that the *foundation* of the missionary vision is rooted in the creation account, not the Abrahamic covenant. The Abrahamic covenant should be seen as the *promise* of creational restoration; and Jesus' commission in the gospel of Matthew then serves as the *initialization* of the creational restorative process. For this reason, it is suggested that the use of the term Great Commission in regard to Jesus' command be replaced with *Creational Restorative Covenant*⁷ - a covenant set in place to put into action the process of restoring the creation to fulfill its original purpose for existence. Although Wright fails to see creation as the foundation for Jesus' commission, he does state that, "God's mission is to restore creation to its full original purpose."⁸ The exact nature of the original purpose for existence will now be examined.

CREATIONAL DESIGN NORM FOR MANKIND

Analysis of Genesis 2:15-22

The foundation for the creational design norm can be seen in the connection between Gn 1:26-28 and Gn 2:15-22. Attention will first be given to the latter passage. The second chapter of Genesis gives additional details of the creation of man that is not given in chapter one. Man is formed from the dust of the earth and given life (verse 7). He is then put in the Garden of Eden. The "placing" of man in the garden is conveyed in Gn. 2:8 and 2:15; however two different words are used to express this idea. In verse 8 the common word for "put" (נָטַע) is used, while in verse 15 the author uses a different word (נָח). The word found in verse 15 is generally reserved for reference to the "rest"

⁴ Kaiser, Walter C., *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 39.

⁵ Wright, *Mission of God*, 189.

⁶ *Ibid*, 214.

⁷ For a detailed argument showing Mt 28:19-20 as a covenant, see Kenneth Gentry, *The Greatness of the Great Commission*, chap. 2 and Wright, *Mission of God*, 354-355..

⁸ Wright, *Mission of God*, 288.

or “safety” in which God gives man or the “dedication” of something in the presence of the Lord.⁹ John Sailhamer comments on the meaning of the usage in verse 15:

Both senses of the term appear to lie behind the author’s use of the word in v.15. Man was “put” into the garden where he could “rest” and be “safe,” and man was “put” into the garden “in God’s presence” where he could have fellowship with God.¹⁰

The use of “placed” in verse 15 carries with it a sense of not only rest, but also purpose. Within the fulfilling of his purpose, man was to find rest and safety in his Creator. It was intended to be rest and safety that could not be obtained elsewhere. In his purpose for existence man was to find rest and safety. The exact nature of that purpose will now be examined.

The purpose given in Gn 2:15 for which man is placed in the garden is generally translated “to work it and keep it” (לַעֲבֹדָהּ וּלְשׁוּמְרָהּ). Although this is the rendering of most English translations, it fails to convey the meaning of the Hebrew words in their immediate context or in relation to the remainder of the Pentateuch. A translation that better reflects the message of the text would be that man was put in the garden to “serve and obey”.¹¹ The argument for the alternative translation is founded on three points.

The first is in relation to Gn 3:23. In this verse, part of the curse of the fall is that man must now leave the garden “to work the ground from which he was taken”. Although the root word for “work” (עָבַד) in Gn 3:23 after the fall is the same as that of Gn 2:15 before the fall, it makes little sense that part of the curse (working the ground) would not differ in meaning from the original purpose of man before the fall.¹²

A second argument is based on a difficulty in the Hebrew Masoretic Text that goes unnoticed in English translations. The “it” in “work it” and “keep it” in English translations is feminine in the Hebrew. The feminine pronoun is meant to refer back to “garden” (גַּן). However, “garden” is a masculine noun in Hebrew. The difficulty, therefore, lies in the fact that the Hebrew text has a feminine pronoun that references back to a masculine noun.¹³ The Septuagint seeks to smooth over this difficulty by changing the pronoun from a feminine singular to a masculine singular (ἐργάζεσθαι

⁹ Sailhamer, John H., “Genesis”, In *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 44-45.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The idea of this alternate translation is taken from Sailhamer, “Genesis” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, 44-45, and U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, trans. by Israel Ahrhams, (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1978), 121-123. Sailhamer suggests “worship and obey” and Cassuto “serve and guard” as the best translation.

¹² Sailhamer, “Genesis”, 45.

¹³ Ibid, and Cassuoto, *Book of Genesis*, 122.

αὐτὸν καὶ φυλάσσειν). This change, however, does not solve the problem that exists in the Masoretic Text. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to offer *all* possible solutions to the problem, *one* will be offered. By simply removing the *Mappiq* in the final constant of **לְעַבְדָּהּ וּלְשַׁמְרָהּ**, the feminine pronoun is removed and “to serve and to obey” easily lies within the semantic range of the Hebrew words.¹⁴ Since vowel and pronoun pointings were added at a later date¹⁵ than the final formation of the inspired Hebrew canon, this possibility is not beyond reason. Admittedly, this suggestion is not without its own difficulties. It does however, seek to address and not ignore the current problems present in the text.

A final point of support for the alternate translation can be seen in the connection between the immediate Genesis narrative and the theology of the Pentateuch as a whole. In the immediate context, verse 15 is followed in verses 16-17 by a specific command from God to man to refrain from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This command by God to obey flows naturally out of an understanding that Gn 2:15 should actually be translated “obey.”¹⁶

In regard to the larger context of the theology of the Pentateuch, the two root words of “to serve and to obey” (**עָבַד** and **שָׁמַר**) are key aspects of the narrative strategy of the author of the Pentateuch. This can be displayed in how the purpose of the nation of Israel unfolds in the Pentateuch. The Genesis narratives give the reader the beginning development of the nation of Israel. Then in Exodus, the author portrays the Israelites being faithful to one aspect of the design norm as they were “fruitful,” they “multiplied,” and they “filled the earth” (Ex 1:7). This echoes the covenantal blessings of Gn 1:28. The crisis for the Israelites is portrayed in Ex 1:13 by stating that, “The Egyptians caused the sons of Israel to serve in harshness” (**וַיַּעַבְדוּ מִצְרַיִם אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּפֶרֶךְ**). This is in absolute opposition to the intentions for God’s people found in Gn 2:15. In the creation account, mankind is to find rest in his service to the Creator. However, the opposite is true for the Israelites. They find themselves in harsh service; not to their Creator, but to Pharaoh.

This lays the foundation for God’s deliverance of the Israelites. God, who clearly set forth His design norm in creation, will now seek to restore His people to fulfill that design norm. God’s reason for delivering the nation of Israel is made clear throughout the Exodus narratives. Pharaoh is to let God’s people go that they may “serve Him” (Ex 3:12; 4:23; 7:16; 8:1,20; 9:1,13; 10:3). This purpose for the Hebrew people is most clearly seen in Ex 9:1 where God commands Moses to declare to Pharaoh, “Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, ‘Let my people go, that they may serve me’” (ESV). The connection between the word “Hebrews” (**הַעֲבֵרִים**) and their purpose to serve

¹⁴This possibility was suggested by Sailhamer in a class on Genesis at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in the Fall of 2006. In addition, Cassuto gives evidence of several existing manuscripts that omit the *Mappiq*, *Book of Genesis*, 122.

¹⁵ Pointings were added by the Masoretes between the fifth and eighth centuries A.D.

¹⁶ Sailhamer, “Genesis”, 45.

(וַיַּעֲבֹדֵנִי) is striking. The root words of “Hebrews” (עִבְרִי) and “to serve” (עָבַד) are separated only by the slightest stroke of the pen, as seen in the difference between the final Resh and Dalet constant of each respective root word. Considering the genius and richness of Hebrew narrative strategy, this is hardly a coincidence. It appears the author has intentionally placed these two words within the same sentence to emphasize the truth that God’s people, the Hebrews, were created to serve Him alone and not Pharaoh. This communicates God’s active role in seeking to restore the design norm of Gn 2:15. God seeks to deliver the Hebrew people that they may fulfill their true purpose for existence.

Once the above serving purpose is established, the author of the Pentateuch immediately begins portraying the second aspect of the Gn 2:15 design norm, which is “to obey.” In Ex 15:26 the Israelites are reminded to “keep” the commandments and statutes of the Lord. Again, the Hebrew root (שָׁמַר) is the same here as in Gn 2:15 for “obey.” This strategy continues to develop when the reader of the Pentateuch is told where God will take his people to serve and obey Him. God desires to give them a land in which they will find rest and safety (Deut 3:20). He is seeking to reestablish with the Hebrew people the same rest and safety that is intended in Gn 2:15. This rest in the land will be the opposite of the fields where they served in harshness under Pharaoh (Ex 1:13-14). Once in this land of rest and safety, the Pentateuch stresses the importance of the obedience of God’s people. This is overwhelming seen throughout the book of Deuteronomy as the charge to obey or keep (שָׁמַר) the commandments of God are repeated over thirty times.

Thus, part of the theology of the Pentateuch can be seen in God’s desire to bring restoration to the design norm. Man was created to serve and obey the Creator in rest and safety in the prepared land of the creation account. The fall brought destruction to this purpose. Throughout the Pentateuch God is actively seeking to bring restoration to this design norm as He delivers the Hebrews that they may serve and obey in Him in land where they will find rest and safety.

It has been shown that following the creation of man in Gn 2:7, God placed him in the garden to serve and obey. The role of the woman in relation to this design norm will now be addressed. Following man’s purposeful placement in the garden, God comments for the first time in the creation account that something is “not good” (2:18). This comes as an alert to the reader since God had previously declared different aspects of His creation as good seven times. Now the Creator declares that it is not good that His newly created man is “alone.” In what sense was the man alone? Was he lonely, as in an emotional need for the company of another being, as some suggest? Walter Kaiser argues that Adam grew “lonely for a companion.” He adds that this loneliness is demonstrated in the fact that Adam “busied himself with the task of naming animals” (Kaiser 1978, 75). Kaiser’s suggestion seems to be unsatisfactory for three immediate reasons.

The first is the very nature of the perfect creation. Sin’s corruptive forces have yet to distort man’s relationship with God; therefore, Adam was enjoying the fullness of joy that comes with uncorrupted communion with God (Ps 16:11). In this perfected state it is

hard to imagine that Adam was lonely in an emotional sense and thus seeking a companion to meet his needs.¹⁷

A second reason is found in an analysis of the same use of the form of the word “alone” (לִבְדָּו) throughout the rest of the Old Testament. Other than Gn 2:18, this form of alone can be found in thirty-five locations.¹⁸ None of the additional uses of the word carry any sense of loneliness in relation to an emotional state. In every other usage the word carries the idea of either being separated from something or someone (Gn 30:40) or it is used to emphasize the uniqueness of someone in comparison to another (2 Sm 13:32; Ps 72:18). The latter example is most likely the meaning meant in Gn 2:18. Man was alone in the sense that he was unique and distinguished from the rest of God’s creation.

The final reason offered against Kaiser’s interpretation is that God’s solution to man being “alone” was to create a “helper corresponding to him” (עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ)(Gn 2:18). This in no way seems to convey that woman was created simply to satisfy the emotional needs of a lonely man. Instead, it conveys the idea of an equal partner that corresponds to man in not only *likeness* (Gn 1:27), but also in *purpose* (Gn 2:15). While emotional fulfillment can be part of this partnership, it is hardly the foundation. Man was alone in the sense that he was distinguished from the rest of creation. He alone bore the image of the Creator, and he alone was bestowed the unique ability to serve and obey the Creator. Thus in the creation of woman, man is no longer the lone distinguished creation. Woman shares his uniqueness, and corresponds to him in the bearing of God’s image; having the purpose of serving and obeying. They are thus equal partners. Wright comments on this truth by suggesting that God’s purpose for creating woman,

is not to find a companion to stop him [Adam] feeling lonely but to find a helper to stand alongside him in this huge task laid upon him as the servant, keeper, filler, subduer and ruler of creation. The man does not need company. He needs . . . mutual help in carrying out the creation mandate entrusted to humanity.¹⁹

Thus “alone” conveys that man was *alone in his unique and distinguished state and was in need of a helpmate, an equal partner, corresponding to his likeness and purpose.*

The intentions, therefore, of Gn 2:15-22 is to lay the foundation for the specific purpose of the existence of man and woman. In these verses the author specifically addresses the proper inward function of humanity. They are God’s unique and

¹⁷ Liederbach, Mark and Alvin Reid, *The Convergent Church: Missional Worshipers in an Emerging Culture*, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2009), 123.

¹⁸ English Versions: Gn 30:40, 32:17, 32:25, 42:38, 43:32, 44:20; Ex 12:16, 22:19, 24:2, Dt 8:3, 22:25; Jgs 3:20; 1 Sm 7:3, 7:4; 2 Sm 13:32, 13:33, 17:2, 18:24,25,26, 20:21; 1 Kgs 12:20, 14:13, 18:6, 22:31; 2 Kgs 17:18; 2 Chr 18:30; Est 1:16, 3:6; Jb 9:8; Pss 72:18, 136:4; 148:13; Is 2:11, 2:17.

¹⁹ Wright, *Mission of God*, 428.

distinguished creations that bear His image. They exist not for themselves, but to serve and obey their Creator while enjoying the rest and safety of dwelling under His care in the Garden of Eden.

Analysis of Genesis 1:28 in Light of Genesis 2:15-22

It has been shown that one aspect of the design norm for mankind is to serve and to obey and that this particular addresses the proper inward function of Adam and Eve. However, this is not the only instruction that was given to man and woman in the creation account. An additional aspect of the design norm, which focuses more on outward function, is seen in Gn 1:28. In this account of the creation, man and woman are created in God's image (Gn 1:27) and then received the following blessing in verse 28:

Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (ESV)

God's new creation was to multiply in order to fill and subdue the earth; thus exercising dominion over all of God's creation. The exact meaning of this blessing must be understood in connection with Gn. 2:15. Wright makes this connection and declares that, "The care and keeping of creation is our human mission."²⁰ Because Wright takes Gn 2:15 as "to work and to take care of,"²¹ his conclusion in connecting the two passages is unsatisfactory. It places the focus of the design norm on outward function. Man is simply to cultivate and care for the creation without any proper regard to inward function. While Wright later stresses the importance of inward function in the design norm,²² he fails to argue his point from the creation account.

When Gn 2:15-22 is understood as conveying the design norm of man and woman existing together for the purpose of serving and obeying the Creator, it brings new light to the magnitude of the blessing of Gn 1:28. Considering this connection, Mark Leiderbach writes,

[God] specified the purpose of living life before him as a joyous journey of worship and commissioned the first couple to fill the earth with worshippers! The very reason for humanity's existence in a perfect garden was to bring glory of God and spread that glory to the uttermost parts of creation.²³

²⁰ Ibid, 65.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid, 404.

²³ Leiderbach, *Convergent Church*, 124.

Man is not to simply multiply; he is to multiply offspring that serve and obey the Creator. Man is not to simply fill the earth; he is to fill the earth with servers and obeyers. Man is not to simply subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it; he is to do it as an act of service/worship and obedience to his Lord. In this way proper outward function, along with proper inward function can be accomplished. Although the design norm includes all aspects of the care of creation and the development of civilization, this is not the ultimate reason for man's existence. The reason is to fill the earth with those that know the Creator, love the Creator, exalt the Creator, serve Creator, and obey the Creator. Harvie Conn writes in regard to Gn 1:28, "It is an expression of God's desire to see the earth crowded with prophets, priests and kings unto God."²⁴ Only in filling the earth with those who serve and obey, can God's creation reach the goal of displaying His glory throughout the entirety of the earth (Ps 57:5,11; Is 11:9).

CONCLUSION

It is at this point that the design norm can be understood as a covenant between God the Creator and Adam his creation that focuses on inward and outward function. The blessing that God gives to Adam and Eve is covenantal in its structure. Adam is to serve and obey his creator (inward function) and to fill the earth (outward function) with those who do likewise in caring for creation and developing civilization. Obedience to this covenant will bring blessing, life, and rest; while disobedience promises death (Gn 2:17). Conn writes,

The Great King blesses Adam, his vassal, with the responsibility of covenant obedience in the world, the arena of covenant response. The earth is to be full of the knowers of God, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). Man is to extend the covenant territory, "the garden of God" (Ezek. 28:13, 31:8-9), to the boundaries of the whole earth.²⁵

Through the design norm, God established the Creational Covenant with Adam; and thus the entirety of mankind. However, Adam transgressed this covenant (Hos 6:7), and the results are devastating. Not only was the Creational Covenant transgressed against, the effects of the transgression shattered any possibility of Adam's offspring faithfully keeping the covenant. The transgression of the covenant was not isolated, but "an event

²⁴ Conn, Harvie M., "God's Plan for Church Growth: An Overview", in *Theological Perspectives on Church Growth*, (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1996), 1.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

of catastrophic significance for creation as a whole.”²⁶ The effects reach every aspect of God’s creation. That which was “very good” is now infected with the disastrous effects of sin.

This lays a foundation for understanding each of the major manifestations of the covenant of grace between God and Noah, Abraham, and David.²⁷ The covenant with Noah (Gn 9) repeats much of the same language of Gn 1:28. It is clear from this that, despite the Fall, God’s purpose for humanity has not changed. He still desires the earth to be filled with those who serve and obey him. The covenant with Abraham ensures on basis of God’s word the promise that the blessings of the creational covenant will be restored. In addition, these blessings will reach all nations and therefore fill the earth (Gn 12:1-3). The Davidic covenant ensures that one of the king’s offspring will establish rest and a dwelling place in the new kingdom - a kingdom that offers eternal restoration (2 Sam 7:1-17).

The importance of seeing the Great Commission as the Creational Restorative Covenant can now be fully understood. The command of Christ in Matthew is not isolated from the creation account, but in direct response to the destruction of the Fall. The ability to fill the earth with those who serve and obey the Creator has been disabled and the possibility of proper inward function shattered. Christ, through His redeeming work on the cross and resurrection, has now enabled obedience to the covenant. This redeeming work is to be understood as restorative.²⁸ The creational design norm stands in hope of being restored through the Creational Restorative Covenant. Both are singular in their purpose; the filling of God’s creation with His people. Gentry makes the connection between the two covenants²⁹ saying, “Both the Creation and New Creation Mandates [Great Commission] are designed for the subduing of the earth to the glory of God.”³⁰ He goes on to add that the New Creation Mandate, “restores man ethically to the righteous task of the Creation Mandate.”³¹ That which was disabled by the fall is now enabled in the gospel. This gospel of restoration is to be taken to the nations; because it is the nations that fill the earth. The nations are to be made disciples; because it is then that they can serve and obey their Creator and be faithful to the Creational Covenant. As Conn writes,

The demands of the one covenant of life, now jarred by
the disintegrating effects of sin, remain, to be re-
integrated by the Lord of the covenant in the grace

²⁶ Wolters, Albert, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview*, 2nd ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 53.

²⁷ This is not to suggest there are multiple covenants, but

²⁸ Ibid, 69.

²⁹ Gentry outlines four similarities between what he calls the Creation Mandate and New Creation Mandate in his work *The Greatness of the Great Commission: The Christian Enterprise in a Fallen World*, (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1990), chapter 1.

³⁰ Gentry, *Great Commission*, 13.

³¹ Ibid.

fleshed out by the redemptive death and resurrection of Christ.³²

As deep as the effects of sin have crept into the creation, so will the effects of the work of Christ seep in to restore creation. Walters says it clearest, “Everywhere humanity’s sinfulness disrupts and deforms. Everywhere Christ’s victory is present with the defeat of sin and the recovery of creation.”³³ The design norm stands, waiting for restoration; restoration that comes through the victorious work of Christ and His Creational Restorative Covenant with His people.

³² Conn, “Church Growth”, 2.

³³ Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 73.

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