

4A MORE ON CREATION, FALL AND THE “GRAND NARRATIVE”

Engineering and God’s plan for redemption

The over-arching narrative of Scripture (under which all other narratives would fit) is that all of history involves four major activities:

- (1) Creation (God’s original making of the universe, all of it “good”),
- (2) Fall (we sinned and ruined everything),
- (3) Redemption (Christ’s death paid for sin and makes restoration possible), and
- (4) Consummation (Christ will return for a glorious future).

The New Testament states several times that God has redeemed His people, once and for all, not by silver and gold, but by the costly blood of Christ. (Heb. 9:12, I Tim. 2:6, I Peter 1:18-19, Rev. 5:9) Redemption literally means “buying back” or restoration. We speak of the redemption of the individual when Christ forgives a man or woman and restores their spiritual life. This is the significant beginning of new life but is certainly not the end.

Francis Schaeffer described four dividing (separating) aspects of the fall and restoration.

- (1) “Between man who has revolted and God. All other divisions flow from that,”
- (2) a separation of man from himself, creating psychological problems,
- (3) a separation of man from other men, creating sociological problems, and
- (4) a separation of man from nature.

“According to the teaching of the Scriptures, the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is meant eventually to bring healing to each of these divisions: healing which will be perfect in every way when Christ comes again in history in the future.” [1]

As Christian engineers we can have a part in helping others to know Christ as Savior (restoring the separation from God), helping to restore relationships between people, protecting and restoring the world God made, and helping to overcome some of the physical results of the Fall.

Creation

These big ideas come from the first chapter of Genesis: [2]

- God’s creative activities began the entire universe.
- God’s account sets it apart from every form of naturalism and pantheism and philosophies of an eternal universe.
- History is real. History had a beginning. Time had a beginning.
- God, Who started it all, had no beginning.

- Nothing in the universe existed before creation. There was no medium of creation. The term is creation ex nihilo (creation out of nothing).
- God alone can bring life out of death and something out of nothing.
- God simply commanded and the universe began.
- All of the Trinity was involved in creation (Jesus –John 1:1-3; Spirit of God hovered over the waters. (Gen1:3)

Creation is absolutely tied to a Creator:

- God, Creator of all, is separate from His creation. Creation is distinct from God and always dependent on God at every instant.
- God created everything “ex nihilo” (from nothing) –Heb. 11
- God created by His word; He is powerful enough to speak the world into existence.
 - “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made” (Ps. 33:6)
 - “Long ago by God’s word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and with water (2 Pet. 3:5)
 - “By faith we understand that the universe was fashioned by the word of God.” (Heb. 11:3)
- The sense is that time, energy, and matter were all created at once, at the beginning, and didn’t exist at all before $t = 0$.
- All of creation was initially pronounced “good” by God. God was pleased with His creation.
- God established all of nature and the “laws” that govern nature.
- Neither nature nor humans are part of God.
- Creation was more than simply “lighting the spark that started it all.”
- The earth was created with great detail and care—for us.
- The world was created for God’s glory.
- God chose to create. God did not need to create, and He clearly did not need to create humanity. Since Father, Son, and Spirit have existed forever, God was never lonely. God has perfect freedom.
- God is intimately involved with His creation.
- God is the Owner of all aspects of creation.

“The existence of every single creature is a pure gift of the Creator. No creature can give itself existence, much less keep itself in existence. Creation in its very depths is dependent on the Creator.” [3]

God has called the universe into being out of nothing, and hence at every moment it ‘hangs’ suspended, as it were, over the abyss of non- existence. If God were to withdraw his upholding

Word, then all being . . . would instantly tumble back into nothing and cease to exist. The continuation of the universe from one moment to the next is therefore as great a miracle and as fully the work of God as is its coming into being at the beginning. [4]

Creation, as a metaphysical notion, affirms that all that is, in whatever way or ways it is, depends upon God as cause. The natural sciences have as their subject the world of changing things: from subatomic particles to acorns to galaxies. Whenever there is a change there must be something that changes. Whether these changes are biological or cosmological, without beginning or end, or temporally finite, they remain processes. Creation, on the other hand, is the radical causing of the whole existence of whatever exists. Creation is not a change. To cause completely something to exist is not to produce a change in something, is not to work on or with some existing material. When God's creative act is said to be "out of nothing," what is meant is that God does not use anything in creating all that is: it does not mean that there is a change from "nothing" to "something." [5]

If the universe is inescapably personal, then there can be no phenomenon or event in the creation which is independent from God. No phenomenon can be said to exist apart from God's all-inclusive plan for the ages. There is no uninterpreted "brute factuality." Nothing in the universe is autonomous) an English word derived from two Greek words that are transliterated autos (self) and nomos (law). Nothing in the creation generates its own conditions of existence, including the law structure under which something operates or is operated upon. Every fact in the universe, from beginning to end, is exhaustively interpreted by God in terms of His being, plan, and power. [6]

Creation clearly points to a Creator (Ps. 19). According to Scripture, all people know God exists, even if they try to reject this truth (Rom. 1:18)

We must maintain a Creator-creature distinction.

The material universe was created good. It is neither to be avoided nor seen as an end in itself. When we understand it as God's Creation, the result should be that we glorify God. [7]

What can be known from creation?

Rom. 1:18ff. God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature.

Through creation we find that God is

- Powerful
- A life-giving Spirit
- Faithful/trustworthy (sustaining the world for centuries)
- Provider (Ps. 104)

- Caring (designing all of the universe with humans in mind)
- Sovereign King
- Eternal
- Personal [8]

Specifically, [9]

Attributes of God “clearly seen” in creation (Rom 1:20):

Self-existence: Rom. 1:19-20, Acts 17:23-29, Heb. 11:3

Omniscience and omnipresence: Job 38-42, Psalm 139

Omnipotence, power: Psalm 145:10-13, Romans 1:19-20

Sovereignty (free will): Psalm 46, 74, 104, 135, Job 38-42, Isa. 55:10-11

Knowledge: Psalm 19:2, Isa. 40:12-26, 55:9

Holiness: Exo. 15:11, Job 22:12-16, 25:4-6

Majesty: Psalm 8:1-4, 111:1-4, Psalm 113, Neh. 9:6, Rev. 14:7

Faithfulness: Psalm 36:5-6, 89:8-12, 119:90

Righteousness: Psalm 50:6, 85:11-13; Psalm 97, 111

Wisdom: Psalm 104:24, v24, Prov. 3:19-20, ch. 8

Goodness: Acts 14:15-17, Psalm 65, 67, 85, 103, 104

Glory: Psalm 19, Isaiah 6:3

Eternality and Immutability: Psalm 90:1-6, Psalm 102:25-27, Prov. 8:22-31

Wrath: Gen. 6-9, II Pet. 3:3-6

Mercy: Psalm 145:8-9, Psalm 113

Grace: Gen. 9:8-17, Psalm 121, Matt. 6:25-34

Lovingkindness: Psalm 33:5, 107, 119:64, Psalm 136

We also learn that

- God has a covenant with the moon and stars.
- Creation expresses God’s power.
- God’s attributes are “clearly seen” in creation. (Rom.1)
- Christ and the Holy Spirit were involved in creation.
- The highlight of God’s creation is the creation of man in the image of God.
- The original creation was ideal, the “way it should be.”

God's creation was not skimpy but abundant-

The word that comes up twice in those latter three days, the days of filling, is this word "teeming" or "swarming." I love the fact that "teeming" and "swarming" is in Genesis 1. This God, this creative God, delights in order, but he also delights in swarming or teeming—he delights in abundance. He wants his world filled not with a minimal specification of creatures—that would be one big light in the day and a little light in the night, a sun and a moon and we're done. But instead this God has strewn through the visible heavens uncountable stars. Thanks to astronomers, we know there are billions of galaxies in the universe, which each contain billions of stars. God doesn't just want a few creatures, he wants teeming stars, teeming birds, teeming fish. [10]

Humans are created specially by God and were called "very good."

Humans are part of nature yet separate from nature.

Humans are created "in God's image".

God created mankind (men and women) in his image.

"What was true of the Creator was to be true of His greatest representatives. This was the controlling Story set in motion by the Creator God when He created the good and necessary conditions for life." [11]

Adam became a living person, a person with value, a reflection of God, and also a symbol.

(In making humans) God himself makes an "image" of himself. Humankind's "images of God" are always deficient and destructive, the Hebrew Bible insists, but God's own "image of God" is the summary of everything he has made, crowned with the words, "It was very good."...This, then, is the picture of humanity we find in Genesis: "creative cultivators."...They also find themselves, as we find ourselves, as human beings always and everywhere have found themselves, sensing that they are in the midst of a story...(Culture) is what human beings make of the world. It always bears the stamp of our creativity, our God-given desire to make something more than we were given. [12]

When someone sees another human being that person points to God's existence more than a mountain, a tree or a fish.

Value of Creation

Because of Creation we discover, recognize, and describe what God has already placed in our world: "laws" of nature (and science), the value of persons and of nature, and moral principles. We build our systems upon these pre-existing pieces, rather than inventing them.

God created out of His own desire and imagination. Most mythological systems told a story of the world resulting from some kind of struggle between gods or between gods and giants, with

the earth being formed from the hacked-up pieces of the loser or from being vomited out. The God of the Bible created our world by His sovereign choice.

Our world is an expression of the Artist-Designer who crafted it. [13]

The created world is not an extension of God's essence, as in pantheism, but has an existence in itself. The created world has value, then, not only as a pointer to God (which it is) but because God made it. This gives meaning to the particulars, something which pantheism cannot do. God made the tree as a tree and so it has value as a tree and therefore we must value it as a tree.

The result of this worldview is that we learn to treat God's creation with integrity. We treat a tree as a tree, a fish as a fish, a man as a man, etc. We love each according to its own order because we love the Creator. Schaeffer puts it well when he says: "Loving the Lover who has made it, I have respect for the thing he has made." [14]

But another important refrain occurs in Genesis 1: God is pleased with the order and complexity of the world he has made. The incredible variety of creation – day and night; sky, land, and sea; sun, moon, and stars; fish, birds, animals, and human beings – all this, in simple yet profound languages of Genesis 1, is declared good. Why? What pleases God? It is good, first of all, that the world exists in all its diversity, with so many kinds of creatures. God is pleased with the many different things he has made. Why? Because it is an expression of his will. Creation constitutes a pattern of obedient response to his commanding word. This is what God judges to be good. [15]

Our entire world, in all its parts, aspects, and relations, is the revelatory creation of the triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God orders and preserves the cosmos by his Word as an expression of covenantal love. All things are unified under God's rule and exist to give him glory. [16]

The order, life, and beauty of the world are consistent with God's good creation. The decay, death, and evil that we see are consistent with a fallen world, the other aspect of reality revealed to us in Scripture.

Fall

At a given point in history (an unspecified time after creation) everything changed because of man's rebellion against God (sin). Genesis 3 describes the major disruption in God's relationship with man. By an act of willful disobedience the initial human pair, having direct access to God and living in Paradise, specifically violated God's commandment.

The Fall prompts these questions:

- What's gone wrong?
- What could go wrong?

What was involved in the Fall?

- Disobedience and rebellion
- A revolt against God
- Listening to lies about God
- Yielding to Satan's temptation
- Betrayal- defection to the Enemy
- Lack of trust; not believing God
- Seeking autonomy - a refusal to remain dependent
- Accusing God of holding out on them
- A redefining of what is good
- A refusal to obey

Adam didn't accidentally slip and fall. The first sin was a deliberate choice, with known consequences.

According to scripture, two events occurred at the point of man's first sin:

1. Humanity became separated from God (Eph. 2- minds darkened, dead in trespasses and sins)
2. The ground was cursed by God

Thorns and thistles made it difficult to grow food.

“Disobedience goes against the very grain of creation itself. Sin is rebellion against both the structure and the Structurer of reality. Such rebellion is inevitably self-defeating and self-destroying” [17]

Suddenly humans were defining the world, their place in it, and the meaning of right and wrong.

- The Fall must be seen as a space-time event rather than a mythological account.
- The Fall primarily caused a separation from God, then a separation from other persons and, finally, a separation from the earth.

Immediate results of the Fall:

Adam and Eve would now “surely die” as God had promised. The Fall produced both physical and spiritual death. The intimate fellowship they enjoyed with God was broken.

Results-

- Expelled from Paradise
- Broken fellowship with God
- Guaranteed death
- Pain in childbirth
- Toil in work
- Thorns and thistles
- Struggles in marriage

Ongoing results of the Fall:

The Fall had repercussions not only for the first pair but for every human being who has ever lived. Adam was our ancestor, our representative, and our (terrible) example. He did what we would have done. Sin entered the world through him. (Rom.5:12)

When they were created, Adam and Eve were given dominion over the entire creation. As a result of their sin the whole world suffered. (Rom. 8:20-22) ...

When man sinned, the repercussions of the sin were felt throughout the whole range of man's domain. Because of Adam's sin, not only do we suffer, but lions, elephants, butterflies, and puppy dogs also suffer. They did not ask for such suffering. They were hurt by the fall of their master.

That we suffer as a result of Adam's sin is explicitly taught in the New Testament. In Romans 5, for example, Paul makes the following observations:

"Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin" (v. 12).

"By the one man's offense many died" (v. 15).

"Through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation" (v. 18).

"By one man's disobedience many were made sinners" (v. 19). [18]

Through humanity's willful disobedience to God, sin entered the world. Sin disrupted communication between God and humankind, spawned disharmony between people, set men and women in harmful opposition to the rest of creation, and brought a curse on creation that resulted in hardship and death. [19]

We are born sinners, and we sin throughout our lives. From Adam's first sinful action to the sins committed today we must understand sin as rebellion against our Creator.

Men, created in God's image, was made for fellowship with Him as the servant-son to rule the earth in responsible freedom. But the Scripture records that man chose to revoke his sonship and to seek to be the master of his own fate. The choice was a disastrous one, for man in his finiteness now found himself alone to cope with the incredibly complicated world. He was, as Pascal puts it, "at best a thinking reed." And to compound the difficulties, in his rebellion and self-will he lost that freedom to serve his God and his fellow man, and instead became a slave to self. [20]

Results of the Fall for humans:

- Sin (Propagation of sin through all generations)
- Death
- Separation

- Brokenness

As sinners, our single greatest problem is our separation from God, not only during our lifetime but forever. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:2, Eph. 2:12).

Is sin simply advanced animal behavior? Animals will fight to lead, defend their territory, and kill to eat. Humans will plot detailed crimes, kill for hatred and revenge, injure the innocent, kill or steal for the thrill of it, introduce others to crime, and cover up their actions.

- Sin causes us to be self-centered.
- Sin causes us to be idolatrous.
- Sin blinds us to God.
- Sin distorts reality.
- Sin causes us to be conformed to the world's mold.
- Spiritual effects of sin- lost, alienated, blind, an enemy towards God

The result is separation, alienation, and condemnation.

Sin has continued throughout history for all of the human race. It is not surprising that we should misuse technology or pursue careers with wrong motives.

Sin has tainted our bodies and our minds-

- We age, we get injured, we get sick, we suffer, we die
- Our abilities are limited
- Our minds are limited

We act in sinful and selfish ways, to the sorrow and anger of God, and to the harm of others. We become sinners in "thought, word, and deed."

The Fall, then, with resulting human sin explains all human evil.

- Struggles
- Crime
- War
- Terrorism
- Sickness
- Bodily injury
- Death
- Natural disasters

All spheres of life—marriage and family, work and worship, school and state, our play and art—bear the wounds of our rebellion. Sin is present everywhere—in pride of race, in arrogance of

*nations,
in abuse of the weak and helpless, in disregard for water, air, and soil, in destruction of living creatures, in slavery, deceit, terror, and war, in worship of false gods, and frantic escape from reality. We have become victims of our own sin. [21]*

All that humans do is flawed. We cannot blame Adam for our own sinful actions.

The Bible...also says that man is fallen; he has revolted against God. At the historic space-time Fall, man refused to stand in the proper relationship with this infinite reference point which is the personal God. Therefore, people are now abnormal. The Reformation saw all people as equal in this way, too -- all are guilty before God. This is as true of the king and queen as the peasant. So, in contrast to the humanism of the Renaissance, which never gave an answer to explain that which is observable in people, the Bible enabled people to solve the dilemma facing them as they look at themselves: they could understand both their greatness and their cruelty. [22]

Effects on creation

The fall affected everything, not just humanity. Adam's sin affected more than just Adam. It negatively impacted all future generations of humanity, and it impacted the natural world.

Not only was humanity changed after Adam's rebellion, but the earth itself underwent changes. Believers differ on the extent of the changes throughout the cosmos and the animal kingdom, but Genesis details these specific aspects of the Curse: thorns and thistles, making labor difficult.

When God confronted Adam about his sin, He also cursed the Serpent (Satan) and cursed the ground (not the planet, not the work), turning man's work (in this case, growing crops for food) into toil.

Rust, corrosion, and material failure (Matt.5) are probably results of the Fall. (Entropy is not necessarily tied to the fall). Certainly our sin damages the earth (greed, folly, wars, no concern for the future).

Romans 8:20 –“Creation was subjected to futility.”

Romans 8:22- “We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.”

There is no question that God's curse of the ground created a new environment. From that point on, the earth has resisted man. Thistles that interfere with man's ability to extract what he wants from the ground have grown up to increase man's costs of attaining his goals. Man must sweat in order to eat. His labor is now unpleasant and burdened, or at the very least it is often frustrated and discouraging, unlike the labor in the garden. The labor in the garden was entirely pleasant. Man was simply fulfilling his purpose and exercising his God-given talents. "To labor is human," but in the garden, it was without a curse. [23]

Sin in human beings has direct consequences for God's creation. In its fallen state, creation itself is also sinful and less than perfect. Since sin is a misuse of power, mankind living within this creation will make it subject to a wrongful exercise of that power. Consequently, creation will bear the marks and scars of mankind's defective stewardship. Not only will mankind fail to fulfil God's purpose, but His creation will be dominated and shaped by mankind's sin. [24]

Some encouraging signs

1. We can fight against sickness, evil, and injustice. We know from Scripture that sin, pain, and suffering are all contrary to God's ideal (original) plan. Therefore we can fight injustice and evil in the world without fighting God. [25]

2. There is hope for restoration

Wittmer makes this important observation: "If the world we see with death and destruction is normal (what we would expect in an impersonal system), then we have no hope of improvement. If, however, the world is abnormal, the result of a cataclysmic Fall, then there is hope for complete restoration." [26]

3. As humans, even though incurably sinful, we are still made in God's image, loved by God, and valuable to Him.

4. Even though fallen, we still function and we can still be creative.

We must distinguish carefully between what was lost at the Fall and what was not lost. Put another way, we must distinguish between man as the image of God before the Fall and man as the image of God after the Fall. Those faculties which are peculiarly human, which designate us as persons-love, morality, rationality, creativity-indicate that we continue to be the image of God after the Fall. In this sense, all humanity is, and has been, as truly the image of God after the Fall as Adam and Eve were before the Fall.

Since the Fall, however, these faculties, like eyesight which is impaired, have been defective. It must be stressed, though, that this does not mean that we are no longer human. ...This distinction is vital; the image of God remains in us after the Fall, though. We no longer reflect God's perfect moral character. Though perfect at the beginning, humanity is no longer so. As we pollute our physical environment, so we pollute our moral environment. We pollute because we ourselves are polluted. [27]

It is not only Christians who can paint with beauty, nor for that matter only Christians who can love or who have creative stirrings. Even though the image is now contorted, people are made in the image of God. This is who people are, whether or not they know or acknowledge it. God is the great Creator, and part of the unique mannishness of man, as made in God's image, is creativity. Thus, man as man paints, shows creativity in science and engineering, and so on.

Such activity does not require a special impulse from God, and it does not mean that people are not alienated from God and do not need the work of Christ to return to God. It does mean that man as man, in contrast to non-man, is creative. [28]

5. The separation caused by the fall cannot be undone by human effort –but can be undone by divine effort.

The picture after the Fall looks bleak indeed- [29]

- Sin had separated humans from God.
- Physical and spiritual death now characterized mankind.
- Mankind had become autonomous, choosing evil instead of the good.
- Mankind no longer represented the absolutely good and holy nature of God.
- The perfect peace and flourishing (shalom) of the Garden had ended.

Redemption/Restoration

Some theologians present a three-part model (Creation-Fall-Redemption), while others discuss the format of Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation (or Glorification), emphasizing Christ's return and the future glory as the final stage of the story. According to the Dordt position Redemption should actually be the first element, since God planned salvation "before the foundation of the world." (John 17) Restoration could be broken into two phases: Restoration after the cross (which we can see and can participate in) and Restoration after Christ's return, which includes the new heaven and new earth.

God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, to save us from sin and restore all things to himself. Jesus' death and resurrection broke the domination of the evil one and inaugurated the renewal of creation. The divine campaign to regain full control over the world will be completed when the Lord returns to make everything right. [30]

Jesus Christ, God the Son, lived a sinless human life, died on a cross, and was resurrected, as God planned and prophesied. The most devastating result of the Fall - Separation from God – was fully resolved by the death of Christ. (John 3:16)

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." (2 Cor. 5:19)

Redemption literally means "buying back." Jesus Christ's death on the cross accomplished everything necessary to pay the price for human sin. Every person who responds to His offer of forgiveness becomes His redeemed child.

“Jesus paid it all. All to Him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain. He washed it white a snow.” [31]

Redemption-Salvation is described as both rescue and healing. Biblical pictures of salvation include

- Dead restored to life
- Blind receiving sight
- Lost found
- Health recovered
- Enemies reconciled
- Prisoners freed

Redemption was fully accomplished at the cross (“It is finished/paid in full.”)

The crucifixion happened in history. If you had been there you could have gotten a splinter from the cross.

As fully God and fully man, Christ acted as the “Second Adam” to reconcile us to God.

Jesus restores humanity, then restores all of Creation.

“Creation tells us what is right and good about people and heaven and earth. The Fall tells us what is wrong about them. The history of Redemption tells us what the Creator is doing to restore righteousness and goodness.” [32]

Christ’s work repairs and restores all the brokenness of sin-

- Our separation from God- reconciled by Christ’s death and our response to the Gospel
- Our separation from self- no longer fragmented, given a new identity, a renewed mind and spirit
- Our separation from others- a new relationship by God’s love poured out in our hearts
- Our separation from nature –by a new mindset towards Creation, proper dominion
- The universe- awaiting new (final, restored) heaven and earth
- The shalom that God intended

Redemption and the Kingdom [33]

Jesus’ Kingdom mission was multi-faceted:

- Announces arrival of the kingdom
- Reveals the kingdom through his mighty deeds
- Reveals source of His power: Abba, Holy Spirit, prayer

- Arouses opposition to kingdom mission
- Gathers a kingdom community
- Welcomes sinners and outcasts
- Explains kingdom of God with parables
- Embodies the kingdom in his life

Restoration

(Many descriptions of God's story link this stage with Redemption, since it is the continuation of Christ's work on the cross.) As the Good News of Christ is proclaimed in the world people respond, lives are changed, families are restored, and relationships are rebuilt.

While we await the return of Christ, the resurrection of the body, and the future glory, we live in this world. When Christ returns restoration will be complete. Everything will be renewed and restored. In the meantime, as citizens of the Kingdom live out their lives in obedience there will be some restoration. We get to participate in the reconciliation as Christ is building a Kingdom and bringing restoration to all parts of the earth.

Francis Schaeffer suggested-

The same principle applies to our other relationships (to self, man, and nature). It is the same gospel and the same Reconciler in all cases. In each case while we wait for complete redemption we continue to seek substantial healing. The gospel offers us internal peace, reconciliation with our brothers, and it provides hope for substantial healing in nature. Just like the consummation does not invalidate our search for daily healing with God it does not invalidate our search for healing with nature. [34]

Christ restores what has been ruined by the Fall. Everything will be fully restored or renewed when Christ returns.

Christ is restoring believers' souls and spirits, transforming our minds, and restoring His true image in His people.

Part of our human bodies and part of nature can be physically restored.

This is the part where we live today.

The phase between Christ's ascension and His return is not some meaningless period. The Good News of Christ is proclaimed in the world, and relationship with God is restored as people respond.

When Christ returns all sin, sorrow, and death will end. In the meantime, believers live out their lives on the earth-working, raising a family, enjoying culture and recreation.

The Kingdom of God expands on the earth.

Christ's sacrifice was complete, yet a process is ongoing. The Gospel is being proclaimed in the world, and responders are being brought into God's kingdom. As individual people are transformed, not only are their lives restored, but Christ working through them can bring restoration to families, workplaces, neighborhoods, and institutions. In addition, through application of Biblical principles, some of the physical effects of the Fall may be reduced. Total restoration will not occur until the Lord returns.

Some writers lump Restoration with Redemption (since Restoration is the outgrowth of Redemption), while others list it as a separate phase, one which is continuing and in which we can participate.

- *Starting point: Gospel of the Kingdom*
- *Jesus announces that the kingdom has come (Mark 1.15-16)*
- *"God is acting in power and love through Jesus and by the Spirit to restore all of human life and all of the creation to again live under God's loving rule." [35]*

Aspects of Restoration

- Advancing the Kingdom of God
- Enhancing shalom/human flourishing
- Restoring parts of the fallen Creation
- Bringing justice/ending injustice
- Showing love to one's neighbor
- Serving the world

"God is acting in power and love through Jesus and by the Spirit to restore all of human life and all of the creation to again live under God's loving rule." ...God is acting to restore creation to again be what it was meant to be (Restoration) [36]

Restoration is like healing from a disease. The good Creation has been deformed by sin and by disease.

In restoration we look through three simultaneous lenses: [37]

- Creation: How was world meant to be?
- Sin: How has the human rebellion perverted it?
- Restoration: How is God restoring it?

Restoration- God's people as Alternative Community in the West [38]

- A community of justice in a world of economic and ecological injustice
- A community of generosity and simplicity (of 'enough') in a consumer world
- A community of selfless giving in a world of selfishness

- A community of truth (humility and boldness) in a world of relativism
- A community of hope in a world of disillusionment and consumer satiation
- A community of joy and thanksgiving in a world of entitlement
- A community who experiences God's presence in a secular world

The New Testament states several times that God has redeemed His people, once and for all, not by silver and gold, but by the costly blood of Christ. (Heb. 9:12, I Tim. 2:6, I Peter 1:18-19, Rev. 5:9) Redemption literally means "buying back" or restoration. We speak of the redemption of the individual when Christ forgives a man or woman and restores their spiritual life. This is the significant beginning of new life but is certainly not the end.

Francis Schaeffer described four dividing (separating) aspects of the fall and restoration.

- (1) "Between man who has revolted and God. All other divisions flow from that,"
- (2) a separation of man from himself, creating psychological problems,
- (3) a separation of man from other men, creating sociological problems, and
- (4) a separation of man from nature. "According to the teaching of the Scriptures, the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ is meant eventually to bring healing to each of these divisions: healing which will be perfect in every way when Christ comes again in history in the future." [39]

In this present life there will not be perfect restoration of the last three divisions, but there can be, in Schaeffer's words, "substantial healing."

"Everything matters to God. Grace must restore everything that sin has destroyed. So every part of our lives and every part of our world must be brought under the lordship of Christ... So whether we are making a meal, tending our lawn, playing with children, or going to work, it all matters now. God cares just as much about what we watch on television as he does about what we do in church. Why? Because every aspect of creation must be redeemed." [40]

Goheen emphasizes the Biblical teaching that all of creation will be restored. Redemption is far bigger than my own salvation. "(The) goal of creation is a restored creation in which we can find a place. Redemption is cosmic in its scope. God restores the whole life of humankind as part of the whole creation." [41]

The apostle Paul writes this of Christ and comprehensive redemption: "For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross." (Col. 1:19-20)

A full picture of redemption includes the restoration of our relationships, our finances, our health, and our attitudes towards work and authority. Since the earth has been affected by humanity's fall, the earth itself will be restored.

“For the creation waits with earnest expectation for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to futility, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected the same in hope, because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of decay into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and travails in birth pangs until now. And not only this, but we ourselves, also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, that is, the redemption of our body. “(Rom. 8:19-23)

“From the Pauline perspective, redemption was not just limited to humankind but was much more comprehensive, reaching to all of creation. In fact, what God has accomplished through the work and personhood of the Redeemer is fully eschatological in nature.” [42]

The concept of redeeming the earth often seems anti-Scriptural to believers who see the natural world as destined only for destruction. A few believers may be uncomfortable with the idea of the redemption of the earth, expecting that the material planet itself is somehow evil and destined only for destruction.

Questions that Follow from the Model

Goheen looks at the model of Creation-Fall –Redemption and suggests three questions that follow which can be applied to any area of life (ref): [43]

- What good can we see in it? (link to Creation)
- In what ways has the original goodness been twisted? (link to the Fall)
- What is God doing (and what can we do) to redeem it and/or to restore the original goodness? (concept of Redemption)

Creation made engineering possible, while the fall made certain aspects of it (e.g. supplying clean water) necessary.

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