

Zachery Lewald

Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview, by Al M. Wolters.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005.

Reviewed by Zachery Lewald, summer 2024

Creation Regained by Albert Wolters is a good book for challenging the Christian's understanding of the depth and breadth of God's created order and its restoration. This book is meant to bring the Christian reader to an expanded view of what is entailed in God's acts of creation as He created the world and its laws and continues to create the world through His sovereign activity. Wolters' softly informative and constructive tone allows for one to test their own worldview against the proposed one comfortably. It is also meant to show the reader that since God's creation includes both the physical and the non-physical, His restoration of it is just as expansive and brilliant.

Wolters argues that it is important for the Christian to understand the structure and direction of creation in order to discern and navigate complex situations in contemporary culture and society. His examples were convincing, as he proposes the role of aggression in the Christian life as neither inherently good nor bad. Through the reformational worldview, he seeks to find new questions to ask about such matters, such as "what are the structure and direction of aggression?" This framework is helpful in a time when Christians overcorrect their beliefs or take them to. In regard to aggression, it avoids the sinful over-use of it in the daily Christian life as well as the sinful avoidance of it altogether.

Creation Regained aids the reader in understanding today's challenges. God's created order is being meddled by sin. Marriage, sexuality, and the Church are under attack by Satan's deceptions. Wolters' insights on how to view these issues in light of

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what they were created to be, how they have diverged, and how they can be restored are needed more than ever.

Wolters' strongest points sold me on this book's thesis. The Christian worldview must be the creation-fall-redemption framework. He rests upon Herman Bavinck's simplest definition of faith: "God the Father has reconciled His (1) created but (2) fallen world through the death of His Son, and (3) renews it into a Kingdom of God by His Spirit" (p. 11). This three-step framework begins with the laws of creation. His division of the natural and normative laws of creation brought a fresh perspective of the layers of creation beyond the physical elements of the earth. These laws were established by God and continue to constrain creation after the fall. Therefore, everything has an intended, original nature. God's creation of the norm of marriage stands within post-fall creation as an advantageous position for anyone who conforms to God's intended idea of the norm. The ontology of God's created norms nests wisdom. Wolters cites Paul in Colossians 1 to show that this created order is knowable, and we should strive to know it. This is a healthy way to view God's intention for creation. It taught me that creation, in essence, is not bad. Sin attached itself as a parasite to these "good" created things.

Wolters goes beyond the expanded view of creation to show that the fall affects every area of creation. Before reading this book, I had a view of creation that was limited to the physical and a view of the fall that was limited to the non-physical. However, both creation and the fall expand into both realms. Wolters uses Abraham Kuyper's idea of "antithesis" to show that within every sphere of life there is an original intended "goodness" that serves the Kingdom of God and there also is a distorted element that Satan claims as his own. This changed my belief about the nature of

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advancements in technology and education. God has always worked through history and man's achievements were only made through Him and His creative image in man. Therefore, these things are neither good nor bad. They have an original intent in creation (a structure) that can be used for the glory of God, but I often see their direction as sinful and wrongfully dismiss them entirely.

Redemption goes just as far as creation and the fall. God's restorative power is not restricted to our souls, but rather it will be used to restore all creation. Any Christian reader will be challenged by this because it makes every interaction and decision on the earth important. The contemporary Christian often views the world as wasting away and that he is not responsible for it. To know that we are basically brothers with creation in the restoration process means that we are responsible for creation. Wolters uses Kuyper's "sphere sovereignty" to show that there is not a single area of life that is not under the Lordship of Christ and that we are responsible for faithfulness to Him in each area.

I would recommend this book to any Christian. This book is a simple, unexaggerated walkthrough of a reformational worldview and its application on pressing issues in the Church and culture. Wolters' structure and direction framework can be applied to almost any situation, from technological advancements to how to treat animals. The ultimate reason why I recommend this book is because it is rooted in Scripture. If Scripture is breathed out by God, then it has authority. If it has authority, then Christians must extract their worldview from it. Wolters' book shows how our worldview should be from Scripture's viewpoint.