

Why did God create?

God is self-existent—One Who exists completely outside of space, time, and matter. (I always consider the concepts of Flatland¹ to form an imperfect mental picture of what that means). According to Zuck “Creation must from the outset be conceded as integral to the purposes of God, for though He could have existed forever independently and yet with purpose, creation has taken place and with it an implied purpose.”² “He could have existed forever independently” and so why did He create? He purposed to create. He had reasons to do so.

Erickson says that “While God did not *have* to create, he did so for good and sufficient reasons, and the creation fulfills that purpose. In particular, the creation glorifies God by carrying out his will. Both the inanimate (Ps. 19:1) and the animate creation glorify him.”³ In fact, most commentators state that God created for His own glory.

Glory = noun 1) high renown or honour won by notable achievements. **2)** magnificence; great beauty. **3)** praise, worship, and thanksgiving offered to God.⁴

GLORY. That aspect in a person or God worthy of praise, honor, or respect; often associated with brightness or splendor in theophanies.⁵

Mills in *The Life of Christ*⁶ opines that God created the spiritual realm first and “Satan rebelled against Him before He created the material realm.” In Mills’ analysis, the material realm (the universe) was created to answer the question “Who has the right to rule, God or Satan?” Is creation just a demonstration to Satan and his fallen angels that God is in charge? I cannot agree with such an analysis. Genesis reports that all of creation was “very good” — “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.” (Genesis 1:31–2:1, ESV; emphasis added) Thus, Satan and his followers—all created beings—had not yet fallen, or God would not have declared all “very good.”

Grudem says “It is clear that God created his people for his own glory, for he speaks of his sons and daughters as those ‘whom I created *for my glory* whom I formed and made’ (Isa. 43:7). But it is not only human beings that God created for this purpose. The entire creation is intended to show God’s glory. Even the inanimate creation, the stars and sun and moon and sky, testify to God’s greatness, ‘The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge’ (Ps. 19:1–2).”⁷ (emphasis added)

Charles Hodge is reportedly a Post-Millennialist and I have trouble with that, but he makes good sense in his *Systematic Theology*⁸ on this topic. He says “From the absolute self-sufficiency of God it follows that the creation was not designed to meet or satisfy any necessity on his part. He is neither more perfect nor more happy because of the creation.” Good stuff! He reports that “Some infer from his holiness that the purpose to create arose, so to speak, from the desire to have a field for the development of moral excellence in rational creatures.” These other commentators continue “As God is love, and the nature of love is to communicate itself, as it must have an object to be enjoyed and rendered blessed, so God created the world that He might rejoice in it and render it blessed.” I think that is partially true, but the historical extension of these thoughts evidently resulted in washed out theology. God is not just love. Certainly, one aspect of God is perfect love and for that to be fully expressed, He would want that love reciprocated from creatures free to choose to love Him in return. However, that cannot be the extent of His purposes.

¹ Edwin A. Abbot, *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, Project Gutenberg March 10, 2008 [EBook #201]

² Roy B. Zuck, *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, electronic ed., 10 (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991).

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed., 399 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998).

⁴ Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson, *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, 11th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵ Allen C. Myers, *The Eerdmans Bible Dictionary*, 420 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1987).

⁶ M.S. Mills, *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record* (Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999).

⁷ Wayne A. Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, 271 (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Inter-Varsity Press; Zondervan Pub. House, 1994).

⁸ Charles Hodge, vol. 1, *Systematic Theology*, 566 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

So, what are the purposes of creation? Enns in *The Moody Handbook of Theology* says, “Without question the greatness, the immensity, the magnitude of creation was to bring glory to God.”⁹ (quoting from Erich Sauer, *The Dawn of World Redemption* (Exeter: Paternoster, 1964), pp. 25–29; emphasis added). Also, Lloyd-Jones in *God the Father, God the Son* says “the Bible does not give a reason for creation. It did not happen as the result of a need in God; there was no necessity for it. Neither was it because of His love. It was a free act according to His will and glory and, ultimately, we do not know the reason why.”¹⁰ Well now, one says “without question ... to bring glory to God” and another says we cannot know! I believe they are both partially correct. Creation does show forth God’s glory and thus brings glory to Him. And yet, we can never fully know God’s purposes in creation. We can observe creation and wonder at the majesty of the One Who created such grandeur and we can come to know God to the extent He has revealed Himself in scripture.

I will leave the ultimate answer to the question to that day when I meet Him in paradise. However, it is evident to me that God created because it was His nature to do so. He is omnipotent and wished to express that power. He is omniscient and wished to create a people who could freely choose to know Him. He is holy and wished to create a people who, though flawed, could choose to strive for holiness. He is love and wished to express that love to a people who could freely choose to return that love. He is gracious and wished to create a people who could freely choose to accept His grace. And much more that we could deduce from the nature of God—that portion of His nature that we are able to comprehend.

Why did God decide to reveal Himself through creation?

Given all the above reasons for His creative act, He would wish to give ample evidence to these “free-choice people” so that they might seek the source of all the grandeur of creation. I recall those times on the open ocean in the midst of a tropical storm my clear understanding that there is a God. Even though I was not saved, I could not avoid the conclusion that the fearsome power of the storm-tossed ocean and the spectacular majesty evident in the night sky pointed unerringly to a Creator. That is why I think He “decided to reveal Himself through creation.” He gave us His Word to study in order to know Him once we were drawn to Him by the creation. I agree with Paul when in speaking to the men of Athens in the Areopagus, he said: “... *he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth ... that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. ...*” (Acts 17:26–27, ESV; excerpted and emphasis added).

By His creation, we are drawn to Him. Through His Word we are saved. That, by the way, is my exact personal experience.

⁹ Paul P. Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, 40 (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1997).

¹⁰ David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *God the Father, God the Son*, 128 (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1996).