

The Big Picture

GOD IN THE CENTER FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION

Created For Him

In the previous blog, *From Eden to Eternity*, we stepped back to see God's larger story through Creation, Fall, Redemption, and New Creation. Now we begin moving closer, continuing to ask the question that guides this series:

What does this reveal about God?

As I studied for this post, I kept coming back to the same truth: **God's glory**.

God's glory is not a side theme running quietly alongside the biblical story. Scripture continually directs our attention toward the glory of the God whose story it is.

This is **His story**.

Creation is **His**.

Redemption is **His**.

The kingdom is **His**.

The final victory is **His**.

And the glory belongs to Him.

That matters for the way we read the Bible. If we read Scripture primarily looking for ourselves, we can miss the One the story is revealing. But when we begin with God, asking what Scripture reveals about who He is, what He has done, and what He is worthy of, the story turns our eyes toward His glory.

And seeing His glory should lead us somewhere:

To worship.

So, as we descend from our 30,000-foot view, we are going to look more closely at each of these four movements through the lens of God's glory and ask another question:

Why?

Why did God create? Why does God judge sin? Why did God provide redemption? Why will God make all things new?

We begin again with **Creation**.

Creation is our subject; God's glory is our lens; God is at the center; and worship is our response.

So let's begin where Scripture begins:

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1).

But why?

In the Beginning: Genesis 1

Begin by reading Genesis 1:1, 26–31. As you read, pay attention to what God does and what humanity receives.

Genesis 1:1 begins with God, not humanity. Everything that follows exists because He creates it.

God speaks, and Creation responds. Light appears. Land and seas take their places. The heavens and earth fill with life.

Then, in verses 26–27, something different happens: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...” “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Notice where humanity's identity begins.

With God.

We are made in His image.

Then, watch the movement in verses 28–30. Who blesses? Who gives the commission? Who gives authority? Who provides what humanity and the animals need?

God does.

And finally:

“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

Genesis establishes something foundational. God is the Creator. Everything owes its existence to Him. Humanity uniquely bears His image. God blesses, commissions, and provides. What He makes is very good.

However, while Genesis gives us the Creation account, it doesn't explicitly answer the question of why. To discover more about Creation's purpose, we need to keep reading.

For My Glory: Isaiah 43:1-7, 20-21

Now read Isaiah 43:1–7, 20–21. As you read, notice how God describes His people and the purpose for which He formed them.

Centuries after the creation account, God speaks through the prophet Isaiah about His people Israel. He describes Himself as the One who created and formed them, redeemed them, and called them by name.

Notice what He says in verse 7: "everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made" (Isaiah 43:7).

The language here matters. God describes these people as called **by His name**, created **for His glory**, and **formed and made by Him**. Notice how every phrase points back to God. They bear **His name**. He is the One who **formed and made** them. And He says that He created them **"for my glory."** In other words, Israel's identity and purpose as God's people ultimately point beyond themselves to God. He has made them His people so that their lives would reflect who He is and bring glory to Him.

We do need to be careful with this verse, however. In its immediate context, God is speaking about Israel, His covenant people, so we should not take this verse out of context and make it a statement about the creation of all humanity in Genesis 1. But Isaiah does give us an important part of the answer as we begin asking why God creates and forms. At least here, when God explains why He formed a people for Himself, He points to His own glory. **Their purpose is not ultimately about them. It is about Him.**

And the language continues. Later in the same chapter, God describes His people as "the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise" (verse 21).

Notice the direction of those statements:

"for my glory"

"for myself"

"declare my praise"

Again and again, God directs our attention away from His people as the center and back to Himself. He formed them for Himself, for His glory, and to declare His praise.

But what about everything else God has made? Does Scripture say that all Creation ultimately exists for God?

It does. And the answer takes us directly to Christ.

All Things Are For Him: Colossians 1:15–17

Read Colossians 1:15–17. Pay particular attention to what Paul says about Christ's relationship to "all things."

Paul writes of Jesus: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or

authorities, all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:15–17).

Don't read those words too quickly. There is a great deal packed into these three verses. As we keep asking why God created, a few things are especially worth noticing.

First, Paul is not saying that Jesus was created. The phrase “firstborn of all creation” could be confusing, especially for someone new to the Bible. At first glance, it might sound as though Paul is saying that Jesus was the first being God created. But look at what immediately follows. Paul says that “all things” were created in Him, through Him, and for Him.

Then in verse 17 he says that Christ “**is before all things.**” In this context, “firstborn,” therefore, points to Christ's supremacy and preeminence over Creation, not to His being the first member of Creation. Paul has in mind the rights and privileges of a firstborn son. His supremacy is shown in His relationship to Creation. This is important. The One Paul is describing is not simply another part of the created world. Christ existed before Creation and stands over it as Lord.

And Paul goes out of his way to make “all things” comprehensive: “in heaven and on earth,” “visible and invisible,” including every throne, dominion, ruler, and authority. His language encompasses the entire created order, both material and immaterial. That matters for our question. When Paul eventually says that Creation is “for Him,” he isn't talking only about human beings, Israel, or even the physical earth.

He says **all things**.

Paul then tells us that all things were created “**through him.**” Christ is not merely present in Creation. The Son Himself was active when Creation came into existence. John makes a remarkably similar statement at the beginning of his Gospel: “All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3).

And John is not alone. Throughout the New Testament, we are given a fuller picture of Christ's role in Creation. Hebrews tells us that God created the world **through His Son** (Hebrews 1:2), and Paul writes of “one God, the Father, **from whom** are all things and **for whom** we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, **through whom** are all things and **through whom** we exist” (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Where Genesis introduces us to **God as creator**, the New Testament pulls back the curtain and reveals something more about our Creator: **the eternal Son was there and was active in the work of Creation**. The Christ we encounter in the Gospels did not suddenly enter God's story at Bethlehem. He was there at the beginning.

But Colossians takes us even further. Creation did not merely come through Christ. It was created **for Christ**.

This is not a theological conclusion we have imposed upon the passage. Paul actually says that **all things were created “for Him.”** Christ is not only the One through whom Creation came into existence. Creation ultimately belongs to Him and exists for His purposes. Everything God has made finds its ultimate purpose in Him.

And Christ's relationship with Creation did not end when He created it. Verse 17 adds another statement: “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Creation not only owes its beginning to Christ. Its continuing existence and coherence depend upon Him.

Think about the significance of that:

All things were created **through Him**.

All things were created **for Him**.

All things **hold together in Him**.

Creation is not ultimately about us.

Creation is FOR Him.

That takes us considerably deeper than the creation account in Genesis alone. We began with: “In the beginning, God created...” Now Scripture has shown us much more. The One who created all things is Christ, all things exist for Him, and even now all things hold together in Him.

The Heavens Are Saying Something: Psalm 19

Read Psalm 19:1–6. As you read, notice what Creation is doing and where it directs our attention.

If all Creation is for Him, what does Creation reveal about Him?

David answers that question beautifully in Psalm 19: “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge” (Psalm 19:1–2).

Notice what the heavens do. They **declare** God's glory. They **proclaim** His handiwork. And it doesn't happen occasionally. Day after day they **pour out** speech, and night after night they **reveal** knowledge. Creation's testimony never stops. It is continually bearing witness to its Creator.

And yet it does so without words. David continues, “There is no speech, nor are there words...Their voice goes out through all the earth” (Psalm 19:3–4). David deliberately describes a kind of wordless testimony. Creation speaks without words, and its testimony reaches throughout the earth.

Paul describes something similar in Romans 1. God's “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature” can be perceived “in the things that have been made” (Romans 1:20).

Creation is not silent. The created world points beyond itself to its Creator. The heavens may be magnificent, but David directs our attention beyond the heavens to the God whose glory they declare.

And notice something else. Psalm 19 does not say the heavens **make** God glorious. They **declare** His glory. Creation does not add something to God that He lacked before He created. Before stars declared His glory, mountains displayed His power, oceans revealed His greatness, or human voices praised His name, **God was already glorious**.

Creation does not make God glorious. Creation declares the glory that has always been His.

That gives us another piece of the Big Picture:

Genesis tells us that **God created**.

Colossians tells us that **all things were created through Christ and for Christ**.

Psalms tell us that **Creation declares the glory of its Creator**.

Creation points away from itself and toward Him.

And that makes what happens next even more tragic.

Fallen humanity will reverse that direction. Instead of allowing Creation to direct them toward the worship of the Creator, human beings will “worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator” (Romans 1:25). But we will come to that in our next blog.

For now, if Creation is for Him, and Creation continually declares His glory, what should be the response of the creatures He has made?

For that, we need to travel to the other end of the Bible.

Worthy Are You: Revelation 4:8–11

Scripture then takes us from the opening chapters of Genesis all the way to the throne room of Revelation. For our final stop, turn to Revelation 4:8–11.

John is given a glimpse into the throne room of heaven. At the center is God, seated on His throne. Around Him, heavenly creatures continually proclaim: “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!” (Revelation 4:8)

As they give “glory and honor and thanks” to God, the twenty-four elders fall before Him, cast their crowns before His throne, and worship: “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:11).

Revelation doesn't leave us wondering who occupies the center of the biblical story.

That position belongs to God.

And notice why the elders declare Him worthy to receive glory, honor, and power: “**for you created all things...**”

The text explicitly connects **God's worthiness to receive glory** with **His work as Creator**. The creatures around the throne do not make God worthy by praising Him. Their worship is a response to the worth that already belongs to Him.

Finally, don't rush past the second half of verse 11: “for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” Creation exists because God willed it to exist.

Think about how far we have traveled. Genesis showed us the moment when God created the heavens and the earth. Now, near the end of Scripture, we see creatures gathered around His throne worshiping Him because He created all things.

The story has taken us from:

“In the beginning, God created...”

to:

“Worthy are you...for you created all things.”

Creation begins **with God**.

Creation exists **by His will**.

Creation is **for Him**.

Creation **declares His glory**.

And the proper response of Creation is to worship its Creator.

From Genesis to Revelation

Look at what Scripture has shown us.

Genesis 1: God created, and humanity bears His image.

Isaiah 43: God's covenant people are described as created “for my glory,” formed “for myself,” to “declare my praise.”

Colossians 1: all things were created through Christ and for Christ.

Psalms 19: Creation declares God's glory.

Revelation 4: the Creator is worthy to receive glory, honor, and power because He created all things.

We began in Genesis looking at God creating the heavens and the earth.

We have traveled through Scripture and arrived in Revelation, where heaven worships Him because He created all things.

And through it all, the direction keeps turning us away from ourselves and toward Him.

Taken together, these passages show us something remarkable:

Creation comes from God, exists for Him, declares His glory, and calls His creatures to give Him the glory, honor, praise, and worship He deserves.

This is His Creation. This is His story. And the glory belongs to Him.

And here is perhaps the most important thing to understand:

God did not create because He lacked glory or needed something from us.

Before there was a universe to display His glory,

before there was a human voice to praise Him,

before there was an angel to worship Him,

God was glorious.

Creation does not make God glorious.

Creation reveals the glory that has always been His.

For Him and His Glory

So we return to the question we asked at the beginning: **Why did God create?**

Scripture has led us to a **God-centered answer. Creation exists by His will and for Him. It reveals and declares His glory, and it directs His creatures toward the worship of their Creator.**

And that is where seeing the Big Picture should lead us. The more clearly Scripture shows us who God is and what He has done, the more clearly we see His glory. **And when we see His glory, the proper response is worship.**

Perhaps that changes the way we read the opening words of Scripture:

“In the beginning, God...”

The story begins **with Him.**

It comes **from Him.**

It exists **for Him.**

It reveals **His glory.**

And ultimately ... **it leads us back to Him, to give Him the glory that has always been His.**