Rooted in the confession of Isaiah 26:8, PASSION exists to glorify God by uniting students in worship, prayer and justice for spiritual awakening in this generation. From its start in 1995, the Passion movement has had a singular mission—calling students from campuses across the nation and around the world to live for what matters most. For us, what matters most is the name and renown of Jesus. We believe in this generation and are watching God use them to change the climate of faith around the globe.

LOUIE GIGLIO is the pastor of Passion City Church in Atlanta, Georgia, and the founder of Passion Conferences, a global movement uniting college-aged people to live for the fame of Jesus. With a desire to elevate God’s glory above all else, Louie has authored The Comeback, The Air I Breathe, I Am Not But I Know I Am, and Indescribable, which was co-authored with Grammy-Award winner, Matt Redman. Louie, and his wife Shelley, live in Atlanta, Georgia.

MAX LUCADO is a preacher with a storyteller’s gift — a pastor’s heart and a poet’s pen. Max’s message is simple: God loves you; let him. Max serves the people of Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. He preaches and writes to the hurting, the guilty, the lonely, the discouraged.
JOHN PIPER is founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For 33 years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota. He is author of more than 50 books, including Desiring God, The Pleasures of God, Future Grace, and Let the Nations Be Glad.

RAVI ZACHARIAS is President and Founder of Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM). Their global outreach grew from humble roots in 1984 and includes fielding a team of itinerant speakers who operate from offices located around the world including the U.S., the UK, Romania, the Middle East, India, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Canada. The hallmark of Ravi’s heart is his strong evangelistic and apologetic spirit that manifests itself from a position of compassion.

RANDY ALCORN is an author and the founder and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries (EPM), a nonprofit ministry dedicated to teaching principles of God’s Word and assisting the church in ministering to the unreached, unfed, unborn, uneducated, unreconciled, and unsupported people around the world. A New York Times bestselling author, Randy has written over 50 books, including the Gold Medallion winner Safely Home.
Jesus was sent by God to save sinners. Luke was one such sinner saved by the perfect life and substitutionary death of Jesus, the Messiah. Though Luke never met Jesus personally, it is clear that his life was radically transformed by the message he received from those who had.

Luke, a physician by trade, compiled information concerning the Christ from eyewitnesses to his life, death and resurrection. The letter is addressed to Theophilus, presumably a Gentile convert who served among the Christian community established through Jesus’ work. This neophyte church was facing persecution, and Luke sought to reassure Theophilus of God’s faithfulness throughout history, seen most clearly in the sending of Jesus Christ. God would surely not abandon his people in the face of persecution when he had already gone to such great lengths to secure their salvation through Christ.

Luke’s Gospel is the only one with a sequel — the book of Acts. There Luke continues to describe the ongoing acts of God through the power of the Holy Spirit as the church spread throughout the known world of the first century. Through the church’s proclamation of Jesus, God continues to seek and save sinners.

This mission is vividly portrayed in the life of Christ seen throughout Luke’s Gospel. Jesus was sent by God to fulfill his pledge to save his people from their sins. Though many would fail to trust him, Jesus relentlessly pursued them in his love. This passionate, gracious love is portrayed in the three stories found in Luke 15 — a lost sheep, a lost coin and two lost sons. There Jesus is pictured as a loving Savior who will go to any length to find what belongs to him.
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The short answer that resounds through the whole Bible like rolling thunder is this: God created the world for his glory. We’ll see what that means below, but first let’s establish the fact.

“Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth — everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made” (Isa 43:6 – 7). Even if the narrower meaning here is “I brought Israel into being for my glory,” the use of the words “created,” “formed,” and “made” are pointing us back to the original act of creation. This is why Israel ultimately exists. Because this is why all things ultimately exist — for the glory of God.

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR

When the first chapter of the Bible says, “God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Ge 1:27), what is the point? The point of an image is to image. Images are erected in public to display the original. Point to the original. Glorify the original.

God made humans in his image so that the world would be filled with reflectors of God. Images of God. Billions of statues of God. So that nobody would miss the point of creation. Nobody (unless they were spiritually blind) could miss the point of humanity, namely, God! Knowing, loving, showing God.

The angels cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory” (Isa 6:3). It’s full of human image-bearers. Glorious ruins. But not only humans. Also nature! Why such a breathtaking world for us to live in? Why such a vast universe? Scientists now say (I can’t verify it!) that there are more stars in the universe than there are words and sounds that all humans of all time have ever spoken. Why is it so gigantic?

The Bible is crystal clear about this: “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Ps 19:1). If someone asks, “If earth is the only inhabited planet in the universe, and man the only rational inhabitant among the stars, why is there such a large and empty universe?” The answer is: It’s not about us. It’s about God. Which means it’s not an overstatement; it’s an understatement. God created us to know him and love him and show him. And then he gave us a hint of what he is like — the universe.
FEATURES

Throughout the first five books of the Bible (the Pentateuch), Moses served the people of Israel in three primary offices or ways: prophet (Dt 34:10 – 12), priest (Ex 32:31 – 35) and as a type of king or ruler (Ex 18:24 – 26). The people of God relied on Moses to lead them as a forming nation and in religious practices according to God’s Word, as well as petitioning the Lord on their behalf. Moses foretold of another prophet that God would raise up to serve Israel in the same vein. Deuteronomy 18:15 states, “The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.” This verse established a culture of anticipation that went unfulfilled for hundreds of years. The people of Israel longed for the next great leader, one who would lead them as a king, priest and prophet. Moses foreshadowed the one for whom Israel waited. He was a type of Christ, looking forward to the Messiah who was yet to come.

Jesus proved to be the long-anticipated prophet, following in the offices of Moses and fulfilling the anticipation of Israel recorded in the Old Testament (Mt 4:12 – 17; Lk 4:16 – 21). Although many Israelites looked for a military leader, Jesus came as a humble servant, even willing to face the most humiliating form of execution within the Roman Empire (Php 2:5 – 8). He is a king — whose kingdom is not of this world — who came to serve his people by atoning for their sin on a cross to rescue them from the judgment of God. He is a prophet who proclaimed the commands of God and showed his followers the right path to please the Lord (Jn 14:15,23). Finally, he is a priest, going before the Father on behalf of the people of God, an office he currently fulfills at the right hand of the Father without ceasing (Heb 7:23 – 25).

Ultimately, all of the Old Testament authors — from Moses to David and the other prophets — looked forward to the day when the Messiah would come and bring finality to their anticipation, a day when they would see their ultimate Prophet, Priest and King.
BECOMING A SLAVE
SO A SLAVE COULD
GO FREE

Judah makes a risky and bold move in this passage in complete contrast to his cowardly and unrighteous behavior earlier (Ge 37:26 – 27; 38:11 – 26). When Judah was forced to act on this pledge (44:33 – 34), he remained faithful to his promise, offering himself as a slave so that his brother could avoid a similar fate (44:17). His substitutionary act would have allowed Benjamin to return to his father as a free man.

Centuries later, one of Judah's descendants would offer himself in the place of sinners so that they might be freed from their penalty and slavery. Judah's pledge of his life as the substitute for his younger brother is a striking parallel to Jesus' substitutionary sacrifice of his life for his adopted brothers and sisters — the Church (Ro 8:17, 29). Unlike Judah, however, (Ge 37:26 – 27), Jesus did not contribute to the slavery of the church. Instead, Jesus graciously pledged himself as a substitute so that he might bring home his redeemed ones, right into the heavenly Father's very presence.

...
FEATURES

Circumcision has value if you observe the law, but if you break the law, you have become as though you had not been circumcised. So then, if those who are not circumcised keep the law’s requirements, will they not be regarded as though they were circumcised? The one who is not circumcised yet obeys the law will condemn you who, even though you have the written code and circumcision, are a lawbreaker.

A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person’s praise is not from other people, but from God.

God’s Faithfulness

What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision? Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God.

What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God’s faithfulness? Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written:

“So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge.”

But if our unrighteousness brings out God’s righteousness more clearly, what shall we say? That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us? (I am using a human argument.) Certainly not! If that were so, how could God judge the world?

Someone might argue, “If my falsehood enhances God’s truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?” Why not say — as some slanderously claim that we say — “Let us do evil that good may result”? Their condemnation is just!

No One Is Righteous

What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one;
there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.
All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.”

Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit.
The poison of vipers is on their lips.
Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.
Their feet are swift to shed blood;
ruin and misery mark their ways,
and the way of peace they do not know;
There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

25Cir cum ci sion 26So 27Or who, by means of a
28 A
29 Or who, by means of a
30Psalm 51:4
31 Psalms 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Eccles. 7:20
32 Psalm 5:9
33 Psalm 146:3
34 Psalm 10:7 (see Septuagint)
35 Isaiah 59:7,8
36 Psalm 36:1
JESUS: OUR GLORIOUS CREATOR
GENESIS

The book of beginnings starts with the most significant words of all time: “In the beginning God.” With these words, the story of God’s grand and glorious plan for humanity commences. The opening book of the Bible is about God’s created design for his world, humankind’s fall into sin and rebellion, and God’s gracious plan to rescue his beloved people from the terrible implications of their sin. The stories of famous people such as Abram/Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph fill the book and trace the story of God’s grace toward his chosen people. At the outset of the Bible, right after the first sin, God promised to send One who would defeat Satan and sin forever. Jesus, the creative Word by which God spoke all things into being (Jn 1:1) would one day make his dwelling in a fallen world in order to save sinful humanity.

God, through Moses, prepared these documents to present a unified picture of the nature and character of himself and his work in the world to the second generation of those freed from slavery in Egypt — those who were poised to take the land of promise. This record of God’s dealings with humanity, starting with his created design, connected this generation to God’s continued grace, mercy and guidance.

The first few chapters of Genesis introduce the God of creation and his goal for his created image-bearers. Human sin contaminated and marred God’s created world, but it has not thwarted his purposes. He will still be known and worshiped, and his glory will fill the earth. In order to demonstrate his holiness and hatred of sin, God acted in judgment (Ge 3:16 – 19). This judgment, however, did not obscure the abundance of grace.
seen throughout Genesis. He pledged to send a child, an offspring of the woman, who would one day crush the head of Satan forever (Ge 3:15). In this way, God declared that he had a plan to reclaim rebellious image-bearers from their sin. Throughout Genesis, God repeatedly made these promises in the form of a series of covenants in which he pledged his loyalty, faithfulness and grace to humans, who were then called to respond to this grace with worshipful obedience.

God’s created design and mission in the world have not changed. He is still intent on filling the earth with his glory and using his created image-bearers to accomplish that goal. Christ, in his wrath-bearing death and life-giving resurrection, allows people to fulfill the very purpose for which they were created. His death fulfilled the covenant promises of God to make a way for people to have a right relationship with God in spite of human sin. Jesus’ perfect obedience demonstrated the values of the kingdom of God and defined the hope that we look for — the coming day when sin and death will be eradicated forever.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

Genesis 1:1
The Beginning

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water.” 7So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. 10God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. 12The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. 15God made two great lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 16God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 17And there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.

18 And God said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky.” 19So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 20God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.” 21And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.

22 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. 23God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

24 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

a 26 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text the earth
Jesus has been from the beginning. We live in a pluralist society where many people believe in some type of “god.” Therefore you probably would not get a whole lot of pushback when you say, “God created the heavens and the earth.” However, understanding that Jesus created everything changes how one views the whole of Scripture. Colossians 1:15 – 17 says that, “The Son [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Paul writes that all things were created by, through and for Jesus.

John makes a similar claim at the outset of his Gospel. The New Testament was written in Greek to a largely Greco-Roman audience. The Greeks believed that there was a unifying force that holds the entire world together. They defined that force as the Logos. The Gospel of John defines the Logos as Jesus. John 1:1 – 2 says, “In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word [Logos] was with God, and the Word [Logos] was God. He was with God in the beginning.” The Word of God — the very agent God used to create all things — took on flesh and made his dwelling on earth in the person of Jesus Christ.

John and Paul affirm this is the agent of creation — the eternal Word of God who was used by God to make something out of nothing. Understanding that Jesus created everything and holds everything together should shape how we read the whole of Scripture. Jesus does not make his first appearance in the book of Matthew. God’s Trinitarian nature is on display from the outset of the Scriptures. And, in many ways, the various stories found throughout the Old Testament help explain the nature, character and work of Jesus Christ. Time and time again, God sets the stage for the sending of the Son to fulfill his eternal plan to save those who were dead in their sins.
(Made in God’s Image, continued)

God said these creations were good. However, when it came to humans, the tone changed. He said that the creation of humans was “very good.” Human beings are an extra-special creation for at least three reasons. First, it is clear that humans have an identity that is rooted in God. When God said, “Let us make mankind in our image,” he reiterated the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit in the act of creation (see article on Ge 1:1). Humans are special because Jesus, as a part of the Trinity, created them in his image. Second, humans are special because they were created for a unique purpose. No two humans are the same. Other aspects of creation serve general functions, but only humans have a unique, individual purpose. Third, humans are designed to have a one-on-one relationship with God through Jesus, powered by the Holy Spirit. As a right image-bearing worshipers of God. As for sin, they would naturally multiply created image-bearers, were it not were to multiply and fill the earth. As is seen in a couple of ways. First, they Adam and Eve lived on mission. This can relate directly to him. It is through Jesus that this relationship is made possible. He came and tore down the dividing wall of hostility that separated his special creation from God (Ro 8:34–39).

(Genesis 1:28)

God’s Created Mission

Adam and Eve lived on mission. This is seen in a couple of ways. First, they were to multiply and fill the earth. As created image-bearers, were it not for sin, they would naturally multiply and fill the earth with more and more image-bearing worshipers of God. As worshipers spread, the glory of God

(continued on next page)

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

4 This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.

5 Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth and no plant had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground. But streams came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground. Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8 Now the Lord God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed. The Lord God made all kinds of trees grow out of the ground—trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

9 A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters. The name of the first is the Pishon; it flows through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) The name of the second river is the Gihon; it flows through the entire land of Cush. The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

13 The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 12 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

14 The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

15 The Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s

\[a\] Or land; also in verse 6  
\[b\] Or mist  
\[c\] The Hebrew for man (adam) sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for ground (adamah); it is also the name Adam (see verse 20).  
\[d\] Or good; pearls  
\[e\] Possibly southeast Mesopotamia  
\[f\] Or the man
ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said,

“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Fall

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’"

The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’"

“You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

The man said, “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,

“Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

To the woman he said,

“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

God’s judgment of sin is interrupted by a stunning picture of his grace. Because of human sin, there are vast implications — from men and women to the very creation itself. But God promises that sin will not have the final word. This first reference to the plan of God to save fallen sinners, sometimes referred to as the protoevangelium (the first gospel), declares God’s commitment to his creation. He will not abandon it to destruction but will pursue it in love. His promise is clear — a descendant of the woman will crush the head of the serpent. The heel of this male heir of the first parents will be struck, though the child will emerge victorious by crushing the head of the evil one. The exact nature of the plan is yet to be explained, but the plan is already in place. Jesus, the promised seed of the woman, would leave no doubt as to the fulfillment of this promise. It would appear that Satan
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We can see the purpose of creation even where the apostle Paul describes how we have fallen short of it. He says in Romans 1:20–21:

“God’s invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him.”

The great tragedy of the universe is that, while human beings were made to glorify God, we have all fallen short of this purpose and “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being” (Ro 1:23).

**GOD HELPS US FEEL THIS TRUTH**

So, resounding through the whole Bible — from eternity to eternity — like rolling thunder is God’s great purpose for all things: He created the world for his glory. Besides Isaiah 43:7 (“created for my glory”), Isaiah presses home the reality over and over to help us feel it and make it part of the fabric of our thinking:

“Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low … And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all people will see it together” (Isa 40:4 – 5).

“I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa 42:8).
“The LORD has redeemed Jacob, he displays his glory in Israel” (Isa 44:23).
“‘For my own name’ s sake I delay my wrath; for the sake of my praise I hold it back from you … I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this. How can I let myself be defamed? I will not yield my glory to another” (Isa 48:9 – 11).
“He said to me, ‘You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will display my splendor’” (Isa 49:3).
“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor … They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor” (Isa 61:1 – 3).

**GLORIFY IS DIFFERENT FROM BEAUTIFY**

This is why God created the world — that he may be glorified. Which does not mean that he may be made glorious. Don’t take the word glorify and treat it like the word beautify. To beautify means to take something plain and make it beautiful. We don’t take a plain God and make him beautiful. That is not what glorifying God means.
When God created the world, he did not create out of any need or any weakness or any deficiency. He created out of fullness and strength and complete sufficiency. As Jonathan Edwards said, “Tis no argument of the emptiness or deficiency of a fountain that it is inclined to overflow.”

Or switch to the word magnify. We magnify his glory like a telescope, not a microscope. Microscopes make small things look bigger than they are. Telescopes make unimaginably big things look more like what they really are. Our lives are to be telescopes for the glory of God.

**WHY THIS PARTICULAR WORLD?**

But we can’t leave it here. It’s too general. It’s too disconnected from the specific persons of the Trinity and from the flow of history the way God is guiding it. The question is not just, “Why did God create the world?” but why this world? Why these thousands of years of human history with a glorious beginning, and a horrible fall into sin, and a history of Israel, and the coming of the Son of God into the world, a substitutionary death, a triumphant resurrection, the founding of the church and the history of global missions to where we are today? Why this world? This history?

And the short answer to that question is for the glory of God’s grace displayed supremely in the death of Jesus. Or to say it more fully, this world — this history as it is unfolding — was created and is guided and sustained by God so that the grace of God, supremely displayed in the death and resurrection of Jesus for sinners, would be glorified throughout all eternity in the Christ-exalting joys of the redeemed.

Or let’s just keep it short: This world exists for the glory of God’s grace revealed in the saving work of Jesus. There is an unbreakable connection between the glory of God, the glory of grace, the glory of Christ, the glory of the cross.

**THE GLORY OF GOD AND THE CROSS OF CHRIST**

Let me show you this from God’s Word in five steps.

1. The apex — the highpoint — of God’s display of his own glory is the display of his grace.

   “God predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:5–6). In other words, the glory of God’s grace — what Paul calls “the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus” (Eph 2:7) — is the highpoint and endpoint in the revelation of God’s glory. And the aim of predestination is that we live “to the praise of his glorious grace” forever.
This is the endpoint of his glory, and everything else—even God’s wrath—serves this. So Paul said, “Choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath . . . to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy” (Ro 9:22–23). Wrath is penultimate. The glory of grace on the objects of mercy is ultimate.

2. God planned this—the praise of the glory of his grace—before creation.

God “chose us in him before the creation of the world . . . to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:4,6).

Grace was not an afterthought in response to the fall of man. It was planned before creation. It was the plan, because grace is the summit of the mountain of his glory. And he created the world for his glory. He planned the world for the glory of his grace.

3. God’s plan was that the praise of the glory of his grace would come about through the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

“He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ . . . to the praise of his glorious grace” (Eph 1:5–6). This predestination to the praise of the glory of God’s grace happened “through Jesus Christ.” In the eternal fellowship of the Trinity, the Father and the Son planned that God’s grace would be supremely revealed through the saving work of the Son.

4. From eternity, God’s plan was that the glory of God’s grace would reach its highpoint in the saving work of Jesus on the cross.

We see this in the title that was already on the book of the redeemed before the creation of the world. Before there was any human sin to die for, God planned that his Son would be slain for sinners. We know this because of the name given to the book of life before creation. “All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast— all whose names have not been written in the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev 13:8).

The name of the book before creation was “the Lamb’s book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.” The plan was glory. The plan was grace. The plan was Christ. And the plan was death. And that death for sinners like us is the heart of the gospel, which is why Paul calls it “the gospel that displays the glory of Christ” (2Co 4:4).

5. Therefore, the ultimate purpose of creating and guiding and sustaining this world—this history—is the praise of the glory of the grace of God in the crucifixion of his Son for sinners.

This is why Revelation 5:9 and 13 show that for all eternity we will sing the song of the
And why did he create a world that would become like this world? A world that fell into sin? A world that exchanged his glory for the glory of images? Why would he permit and guide and sustain such a world? And we answer: for the praise of the glory of the grace of God displayed supremely in the death of Jesus.

I ask:

• Is the glory of God the brightest treasure on the horizon of your future? Paul expressed the Christian heart in Romans 5:2, “We boast in the hope of the glory of God.”
• Is the glory of grace the sweetest news to your guilty soul?
• Is the glory of Christ in your life the present, personal embodiment of the grace of God?
• Is the glory of the cross the saddest and happiest beauty to your redeemed soul?

Lamb. We will say with white-hot admiration and praise, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation” (Rev 5:9).

YOUR BRIGHTEST TREASURE

So we ask again, in conclusion, “Why did God create the world?” And we answer with the Scriptures: God created the world for his glory. God did not create out of need. He did not create the world out of a deficiency. He was not lonely. He was supremely happy in the fellowship of the Trinity — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. He created the world to put his glory on display that his people might know him, and enjoy him and show him.

Note: When italics are used in the Scripture references above, they have been added by the author to show emphasis.
Adam and Eve represent a profound paradox. They are simultaneously the crowning achievement of God’s creation, created in his very image, and the symbol of mankind’s greatest failure. In verse 1 the serpent appeared in Paradise with no introduction. The serpent symbolizes something both fascinating and loathsome. Yet neither Adam nor Eve saw the danger embodied in the serpent. The danger of this creature was quickly realized in verse 8 after Adam and Eve were enticed by its suggestion and drawn into the depth of sin. According to his custom, God came walking through the garden in the cool of the day, and for the first time Adam and Eve hid from him in shame because of their sinful disobedience.

In Romans 5:12 – 21 Paul takes his readers back to this very moment in history and offers a divinely inspired interpretation. He explains that Adam’s sin led to the downfall and death of the entire human race. Through one man (Adam), death came. Yet through one Man (Jesus Christ), grace and the gift of God (eternal life) was given.

The works of these two men, Adam and Jesus, are not merely opposites of one another. Christ’s work — the work of redemption accomplished on the cross — is far greater, for it brings God’s life and redemption to those who are spiritually dead. The death of Adam spread to all, but the life of Christ overcame it. Through Adam’s disobedience, death reigned and the world stood condemned before God.

In the face of this condemnation, Jesus offered humanity the free gift of salvation by faith that resulted in justification. That is to say, the aim of this gift is to justify (remove condemnation) from those who stood condemned. This glorious promise provides remarkable hope for those who are “in Christ.” They have been reborn, by the power of God, and their status is transferred from being “in Adam” to “in Christ.” In turn, they receive the inheritance promised to all those who are “in Christ” and avoid the wrath of those who are “in Adam.” So much greater is the work of Jesus than the sin of Adam!
(The Promised One, continued)

had done far more than strike the heel of the Son of God as Jesus hung lifeless on a cross. But God would have the final word. Through Jesus’ victorious resurrection, he would crush the head of Satan—permanently declaring victory over sin and death and fulfilling the promise made at the outset of the Bible.

To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’

“Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, “With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.” Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

Now Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.” While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Then the Lord said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

The Lord said, “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth.”

Cain said to the Lord, “My punishment is more than I can bear. Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me.”

But the Lord said to him, “Not so; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over.” Then the Lord put a mark on Cain so that no one who