

A Theory of Everything

—God at War, Week 3—

(NIV)

I. God's Act of _____ was for _____

The most basic question of all is “why is there something instead of nothing?” The Christian answer is that the personal triune God created all things. But why?

- **God Created all things for his Glory: he needed nothing**
 - Isaiah 43:6-7
 - Revelation 4:11
 - Psalm 19:1
- **Human beings were God's “imagers” to rule earth on God's behalf**
 - Genesis 1:26-28
 - Psalm 8:3-6
- **Divine angelic beings were God's “imagers” to rule in heaven on God's behalf (and note that these beings were created first).**
 - Genesis 1:26-27
 - Job 38:4-7

II. God's Act of _____ was _____

The story of the Bible moves from the rebellion of both divine and human “imagers,” through God's long process of restoring humanity to ruling as God intended, ultimately through the human (and divine) Jesus Christ, in his crucifixion, resurrection, and rule—and through believers in him.

- **God saved us not only out of compassion, but for his glory**
 - Psalm 106:7-8
 - Romans 9:22-24
 - Ephesians 1:3-14

III. God's Glory in Redemption is _____

To whom did God intend to show his glory in redemption? The obvious answer is the redeemed. But Scripture also points to God demonstrating his glory to the angelic beings, both good and evil. This heightens God's glory since it includes a larger audience and a host of powerful defeated enemies.

- **Christ's redemption specifically defeated of the fallen powers**
 - Colossians 2:13-15
 - 1 Corinthians 15:20-25
 - Revelation 20:2
- **Part of God's purpose in this is to showcase his power and wisdom to the angelic beings, both good and evil**
 - Ephesians 3:8-11
 - 1 Corinthians 4:8-9
 - 1 Peter 1:10-12

IV. God's Glory in _____ is (Debatably) Intensified _____

The traditional understanding of creation is that God created all things, and then the angels rebelled. However, the creation passages which show God fighting chaos in creation suggest another possibility—that the angelic fall preceded the physical creation. This raises the possibility of a spiritual warfare element in creation itself, and perhaps that humanity is in part created in response to this prior rebellion—this would again entail a heightened demonstration of God's glory in creation and humanity. **But this remains unclear and somewhat speculative.**

- **Different biblical creation stories emphasize different aspects of creation**
 - Genesis 1 portrays no conflict with chaos, and this seems deliberately counter to competing pagan creation myths.
 - But we *do* see God's conflict with chaos in other passages on creation: Ps 74:13-17; 89:9-12; Job 26:6-13; (see Job 38:8-11; Prov 8:27-29).
- **Understanding a spiritual conflict within or before physical creation is not necessarily inconsistent with Genesis 1-3.**
 - Genesis 1:1 could be a heading, with Genesis 1:2 showing the aftermath of a prior conflict with chaos and evil.
 - This could help explain humanity's mandate to rule (1:26), why Eden was distinct from the rest of the earth (2:8-9), the need to “guard” Eden (2:15), the knowledge of evil already among the divine beings (3:4; 3:22), and even the strange appearance of the evil serpent (3:1).
 - Physical creation could still be “very good” (1:31), since it reflects order and God's purposes—even if there is an element of chaos and evil that must be continually held at bay by God (and his imagers?). Thus, the second creation will be greater than the first (Rev 21:1, 27).
- **An angelic fall before creation also fits (but is not required by) passages which speak of Christ's redemption as the plan of God since before creation.**
 - Ephesians 1:4
 - Ephesians 3:8-11
 - Revelation 13:8
- **The fact the humans in the end participate in the judgment of the rebellious angels would bring this story full circle.**
 - 1 Corinthians 15:21, 24-25
 - 1 Corinthians 6:3
 - Romans 16:20

This all raises the interesting possibility that the physical universe and humanity was created in response to the prior fall of angelic beings. It is as though God says, “Oh, you Satan and demons, you refuse to accept my rule and submit to me? Watch what I will do. I will make weaker creatures, embodied humans, ‘a little lower than the angels’ (Ps 8:5). I will give them the mandate to rule over creation. I will even allow you access to them to tempt and corrupt (Gen 3:1). But in the end I will accomplish through them, even though sinful, what you could never achieve, you rebellious spirits—and in the end you will bow to the human, Jesus Christ, and to redeemed humanity in Him. My purposes on the earth will stand, and you will see my wisdom and bow before my glory” (Eph 3:9-10; Phil 2:9-11). Yet this remains speculative. (The alternative is that the angels rebelled after the creation of humanity, but before the events of Genesis 3. **The purposes of God's glory remain the same either way.**)

The Bottom Line

_____ you are caught up in a mysterious, epic story of God's _____ and _____ before the _____ of _____ beings—so play your part and _____!