

In His Image

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature;
the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. NASB

God's great purpose in Salvation

God has many purposes for which He made the creation. Indeed everything He has made has a specific purpose to fulfill in the grand scheme of His plan for the ages. Everything has a very wonderful and significant reason for existing, and all things ultimately work out into conformity with the purposes of God, according to His Providence. In fact everything that God does has its own purpose.

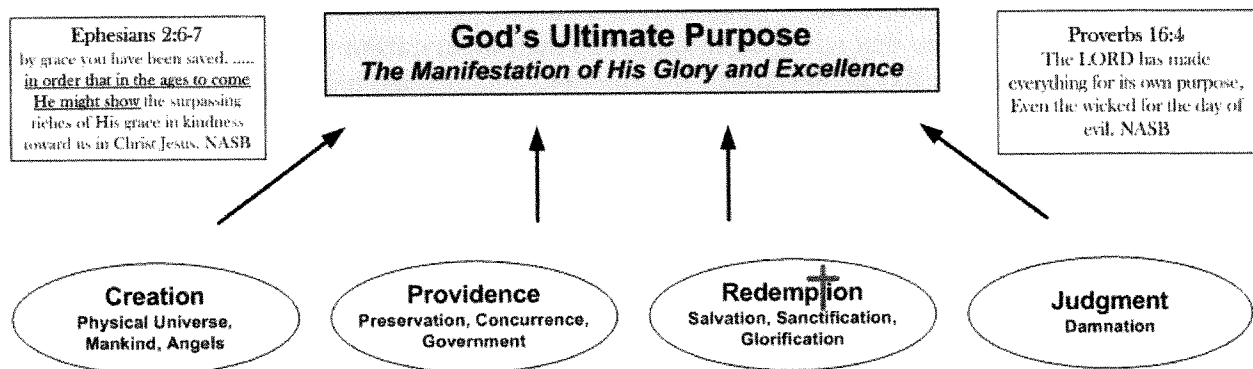
Proverbs 16:4 - 4 The LORD has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil. NASB

And this includes salvation. Consider these verses in Ephesians 1.....

Ephesians 1:11-12 - 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 **to the end** that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. NASB

Here, the salvation of the saints is seen to be ***“predestined according to God's purpose,”*** but notice that this is not God's highest purpose. Oh no, here it says that the predestination of salvation is ***“to the end that we.....should be to the praise of His glory!”*** Learn then that the salvation of people is NOT God's highest purpose, but it works to the higher purpose of the ***“praise of the glory of God!”*** So when we ask the question, what is the **highest** purpose of God in saving rebellious sinners, the answer is that His glory should be praised! Why did God create the earth? Why does God save fallen sinners? Why does God rule over history with a mighty Providence? What great purpose is it which makes all other purposes of God subservient to it? What is the chief end for which God created all things? I think it can be most clearly summed up in the statement.....

“The chief end of God in the creation of all things is to manifest the Glory and Excellency of His own nature as God, and to express through creation, providence and redemption the manifold perfections of His divine character”



ALL PURPOSES OF GOD SERVE THE HIGHER PURPOSE OF THE DISPLAY OF HIS GLORY!

Dear reader, God is a being of such awesome wonder and infinitely profound beauty that the expression of His being is the highest and most glorious idea or concept that can be conceived. Further, the experience of KNOWING GOD IN AN INTIMATE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP is the most

fulfilling and exhilarating reality that exists for mankind, and it is the highest purpose for which mankind was created, because through this God displays His own glory. As the Westminster Catechism states, *"The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever."* The Apostle Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians

1 Corinthians 10:31 - 31 Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**
NASB

Here the Apostle sums up all our human purposes, he says *"whatever you do.....do it all to the glory of God!"* Dear Reader, here we have purpose, here we have meaning! This is in fact also what the Lord Himself taught us when He gave us the great commandments. He said all the Law and Prophets depend on these two commandments. In other words, you can sum up the entire Old Testament in this.....

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And He said to him, **"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."** 38 **"This is the great and foremost commandment."** 39 "The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
NASB

Here Jesus tells us the chief purpose for our existence. It is to **"love God"**, to worship Him with everything that is within us. Consider the meaning of **worship**, [to ascribe worth or value to something] in relation to God's highest purpose. God seeks to manifest or show forth the excellency of His character, and we are **commanded** to **"love Him and praise Him and revere Him."** This is why sin is such an abominable failure on the part of mankind, because people thereby fail to glorify God, the highest purpose for which they were made and also the highest purpose God has for making them.

Therefore whenever we consider God's purpose specifically in our salvation, we must remember that this fits into the grand scheme of God's ultimate purpose, **to manifest His own glory** and excellency as God!

God delights in Himself

Why has God chosen to use a **creation** of this planet earth, including **people and angels**, and a massive rebellion of both, govern it with a mighty **Providence** and glorious judgment in the **ages of history** through the rise and fall of kingdoms and powers and authorities, having worked an amazing **redemption** from that rebellion through His own **incarnation** into human flesh resulting in His own crucifixion, burial and resurrection, and through this central act to play out the great **saga of salvation from sin and from death**? Why does the God of all people bring everyone in judgment before His throne to give an accounting for their own life before Him, and judge each one as individual creatures He has made, according to His holy Law? The whole of **redemptive history** from **creation** to the **eternal state** exists **to manifest His own glory** and excellency as God!

But why is it so important to God to manifest His own glory? This is a profound consideration indeed. The short answer is He delights in the display of His own glory and excellency as God because **He is the paragon** of all that is **good**, the **highest expression of beauty and virtue** in His own nature as God. But how can we explain this. The answer can be seen in the word **"glory"** itself. It can mean **praise** or **honor** or even **fame**....and with God it certainly has that sense about it because His is the **highest** and **most worthy** praise and honor and fame. But it is more than that. **The glory of God is His outshining magnificence, His radiant splendor, His**

effulgent brilliance and resplendence! It is seen in His nature as Light! And His glory is much like light in that it shines out, it moves out from the center, much like the sun. The sun cannot help but shine forth because of its very nature. So it is with God, His nature is **“glorious,”** that is it shines outward from center in brilliance and radiant splendor! Like the magnificence of jewels, refracting light in beauty and resplendence, so is God’s nature, with all the facets of His attributes, each one beaming the brightness of glory! This is seen for example with the Shekinah glory of God which was present at the Tabernacle and Temple. When God’s presence was among the people, there was an outshining of glory from His being which could be seen and felt so strongly that it would keep men from performing their duties!

Exodus 40:34-36 - 34 Then the **cloud covered** the tent of meeting, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** 35 And **Moses was not able to enter** the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.** NASB

2 Chronicles 5:11-14 - 11 And when the priests came forth from the holy place (for all the priests who were present had sanctified themselves, without regard to divisions), 12 and all the Levitical singers, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and kinsmen, clothed in fine linen, with cymbals, harps, and lyres, standing east of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests blowing trumpets 13 in unison when the trumpeters and the singers were to make themselves heard with one voice **to praise and to glorify the Lord,** and when they lifted up their voice accompanied by trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and **when they praised the Lord saying, “He indeed is good for His lovingkindness is everlasting,”** then the house, **the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.** NASB

But **God’s glory** is more than this. It is more than just the outshining radiance of His beauty, honor and fame. The **reason His glory shines out** is because of His entire **nature as God.** His nature is the sum total of all His attributes which all exist in His **perfection and excellency** as God which we call His **Goodness!** He is the paragon of all that is good or virtuous. He is in His very nature **virtue**, or Goodness. There is no attribute of God which is not **“good,”** they are all together summed up in the idea of **Goodness.** His love and mercy are good, His justice and wrath are good, His power and knowledge are good, and His self-existence and immutability are good, His immanence, transcendence and infinitude are good as is His eternality and personality! All of His attributes come together in His Goodness! And because this Goodness exists in its highest form in God, it **must shine outward like bright Light,** it must manifest, it must radiate in splendor with brilliance and brightness because it is in itself **“Glorious”** or full of **Glory!** This then is to say that God’s Glory is related to His Goodness in its very nature, or that God’s glory radiates outward because His Goodness is of such magnificent quality that it is glorious by nature, or outshining and radiant because of its overflowing Goodness! This can be seen in many places in Scripture where **God’s Goodness is related** to His **moral perfection,** or His commandments, and these are seen as glorious or even seen in manifestations of His glory.

Exodus 33:18-34:9 - 18 Then Moses said, "I pray Thee, **show me Thy glory!**" 19 And He said, "**I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you;** and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" 21 Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen." 34 Now the Lord said to Moses, "**Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.....**" 5 And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the Lord. 6 **Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty**

unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." 8 And Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship. 9 And he said, "If now I have found favor in Thy sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate; and do Thou pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Thine own possession." NASB

See here where Moses asked God to **show him His glory** and God responded first by protecting Moses from the intensity of His full unveiled glory by placing him in the cleft of the rock. Moses brought the two stone tablets as God intended to repeat His commandments during the encounter. Then as God's passes by, He recounts in a spoken "**word**" the glory of His person or nature saying, ***"The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."*** But consider what it is that God reveals **AS** His own glory. It is a list of some of His attributes, the virtues of His own moral perfection. See here what the nature of God and His glory are intrinsically. They are the perfection and excellency of His nature, the attributes that make up the divine being. Therefore we should **not** think of the glory of God as **separate** from the moral perfection of ALL of His attributes or the beauty of His holiness [otherly character], or any other aspect of His nature. They are all intrinsically tied together. All of His attributes are equally glorious and good!

So when we consider what **God delights in**, we need to understand that **there is nothing more profound, or beautiful, or pleasant than God's own glory and Goodness**. Therefore He delights in His own glory above all other things, which are all created things and only reflect His glory partially, or veiled images of God's own original Goodness. There are actually numerous biblical texts which explicitly state that God seeks His own glory. In fact, there are so many, it would be exhausting just to list them all much less examine them. But here are a few.....

Isaiah 48:9-11 - "For the sake of My name I delay My wrath, And for My praise I restrain it for you, In order not to cut you off. 10 "Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tested you in the furnace of affliction. 11 "For My own sake, for My own sake, I will act; For how can My name be profaned? And My glory I will not give to another. NASB

Isaiah 43:7 - Everyone who is called by My name, And whom I have created for My glory, Whom I have formed, even whom I have made. " NASB

Jeremiah 13:11 - 11'For as the waistband clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole household of Israel and the whole household of Judah cling to Me,' declares the LORD,' that **they might be for Me a people, for renown, for praise, and for glory**; but they did not listen. NASB

Psalms 106:7-8 - Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Thy wonders; They did not remember Thine abundant kindnesses, But rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. 8 Nevertheless **He saved them for the sake of His name, That He might make His power known**. NASB

John 7:18-19 - 18 "He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but **He who is seeking the glory of the One who sent Him**, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. NASB

Matthew 5:16 - 16 "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, **and glorify your Father who is in heaven**. NASB

John 12:27-29 - 27 "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But **for this purpose I came to this hour**. 28 "**Father, glorify Thy name**." There came therefore a voice out of heaven: "**I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again**." NASB

John 17:24 - 24 "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, **in order that they may behold My glory**, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world. NASB

Romans 9:17 - 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I raised you up, to demonstrate My power in you, and **that My name might be proclaimed throughout the whole earth**." NASB

1 Peter 4:11 - 11 Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; **so that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory** and dominion forever and ever. Amen. NASB

Learn then, the Bible plainly declares that **chief** among the **purposes of God** is the **pursuit of His own glory** and the fame of His great name!

And God is the only being for who it is **right** and **proper** to delight in Himself, because He Himself is the paragon of virtue and goodness. All other beings derive their goodness from the Creator and are in their best display, only vague **reflections** of the **source** of all virtue, which is God. Therefore it is **improper**, even sinful and blasphemous, for creatures to delight in themselves **above the Creator**, who is far more, yes infinitely more delightful than the **creature**. This is what God calls **idolatry** and it violates the first commandment of God's standard for worship, the Ten Commandments. This is the same reason why the second commandment **forbids the creating of images or idols** to represent God, because He cannot be represented by any created things for He is infinitely higher and more beautiful and profound than anything created or that the creature can conceive.

Exodus 20:2-6 - 2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 **"You shall have no other gods before Me.** 4 **"You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not worship them or serve them;** for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. NASB

Grudem comments.... *"Someone might object that it is wrong for God to seek glory for himself in creating man. Certainly it is wrong for human beings to seek glory for themselves, as we see in the dramatic example of the death of Herod Agrippa I. When he proudly accepted the shout of the crowd, "The voice of a god, and not of man!" (Acts 12:22), "immediately an angel of the Lord smote him, because he did not give God the glory; and he was eaten by worms and died" (Acts 12:23). Herod died because he robbed God of glory, glory that God deserved and he did not....But when God takes glory to himself, from whom is he robbing glory? Is there anyone who deserves glory more than he does? Certainly not! He is the Creator, he made all things, and he deserves all glory. He is worthy of receiving glory. Man may not seek glory for himself, but in this case what is wrong for man is right for God, because he is the Creator. It is right not wrong, that he be glorified—in fact, if he did not receive glory from all creatures in the universe, that would be horribly wrong!" (from Systematic Theology, Copyright © 1994 by Wayne Grudem)*

Therefore, God delights in His own glory and has made the creation as a means of displaying His Goodness in all of its various attributes.

Now we have laid some ground work to understand **God's purpose in salvation**, which serves the higher purpose of the display of His own glory and excellency as God. In salvation, God displays and manifests His own glory.

Ephesians 3:8-11 - 8 To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, 9 and **to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery** which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; 10 **in order that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places.** 11 This was in accordance with **the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus** our Lord, NASB