

Our ethics, the principles on which our right-and-wrong is based, must start with the reason we are on earth. God created for a reason. The objective God has for us is that we be transformed into the character of Jesus, conformed to His image, partakers of the divine nature (2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, 2 Peter 1:4, respectively.). Whatever we choose to be our morality, our practices must be leading us to that goal.

Why Did God Create?

Did God not anticipate that things would go wrong? The universe has been one headache after another since day six. Many people believe that God has been trying to catch up with the imperfections of creation, trying various things to get it back on track. So, they view God's interactions with the patriarchs, the Law, and Jesus as various attempts to straighten us out. But this idea makes God a very bad engineer.

Did God make people with a sinful nature so that they were guaranteed to fail? Most churches teach this, although Ecclesiastes 7:28 says, "God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes." If we were created with sinful natures, then we are not accountable for our sin; we had no choice. If God created us to fail, then the objective of saving us was no more than a scheme to make Himself look good by rescuing the very people whom He had designed to be condemned.

Are we part of an eternal battle between good and evil? Many religions teach this. But the philosophical foundation is flawed. Only good can be absolutely good, which is our concept of God. Evil cannot be consistently evil or it becomes self-destructive. Even Satan took care of his own, as Jesus pointed out, "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (Mark 3:23 – 26) Therefore, although good can be absolute, evil is never more than a percentage; the two are not equal; good will triumph in the end.

Many teach that we and the angels exist for the purpose of praising and worshipping God. Although God deserves praise and worship, if God created us for that purpose, then He is a very self-centered being, which is contrary to the concept of love.

Perhaps God created people in order to have someone to love and to be loved in return, voluntarily. This is a nice thought, but does not go far enough. God already had angels to love. Angels can choose, as evidenced by the fact that many of them chose badly, so they can choose to love God or not. People would become a second attempt after God failed with the angels. Since not all people love God, His first two attempts have failed, implying the need for another attempt. And, God could be accused of being a poor engineer.

The Universe Was Created For Jesus and By Jesus

- Colossians 1:16 For in Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible or invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and into Him.
- Hebrews 2:10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

To communicate effectively, God has interacted with people in different ways in different times. Sometimes, God presents Himself as a Father figure; sometimes as a brother, the Son; sometimes as power, the Spirit; and sometimes as philosophy, the Word. God is One; He presents Himself differently to make different ideas clear.

The universe was created by and for the Son so that He might be firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29) and be not ashamed to call them brethren. (Hebrews 2:11) So, the purpose of creation had something to do with creating the family of God.

But were angels not enough? Could not God have made them His family? The purpose of creation must include something that could not be accomplished by angels, something people could bring to the table.

The Purpose was to Teach Angels and to Bring People and Angels Together.

- Ephesians 3:10 – 11 ...to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- Ephesians 1:10 ...that in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ which are in heaven and which are on the earth – in Him.
- Hebrews 12:22 – 24 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel.

Many have taught that people are superior to angels. They cite Hebrews 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" But being a servant does not make one less. Jesus

was prophesied to be a servant (Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12) and made a point of acting out the role of a servant. (John 13:3 – 17) Serving is a characteristic of the people of God.

Some even think that people become angels after they physically die. But the spirits of people and the spirits called angels are two different groups. (Hebrews 12:22 – 24, Revelation 5 – 7)

The angels who did not rebel have the task of serving the faithful on earth. The faithful on earth, the church, teach angels. But what can a faithful person living on earth teach an angel? The angels who did not rebel are with God in heaven. Because they live with God, they have sight but no opportunity for faith. Sight alone is not enough to stay with God forever, as evidenced by the angels who rebelled. To stay with God for eternity, angels also need faith.

The purpose of creation was to build an incubator for faith. Every person on earth has a spirit that will live forever. The only question is whether that spirit will be connected with God for eternity, or be broken off, disconnected, “dead.” Angels will live forever, also, either in the abyss followed by the lake of fire, or in heaven. The key ingredient is faith. People learn faith because it is the only way they can connect with God. Angels learn faith by watching the faithful.

The Objective: for All Spirits to Have the Character of Jesus.

- 2 Corinthians 3:18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, from the Lord, the Spirit.
- 2 Peter 1:2 – 4 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
- Colossians 3:10 Put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.
- Romans 8:29 For whom He foreknew He predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn of many brethren.

People are messy. Even faithful people have different capabilities, personalities, and habits. Our pasts have scarred us, so we continue to make poor decisions, although we hope to make fewer and fewer as life goes on. But, if the spirits of physically dead faithful people are to populate heaven forever, how will we manage the differences? If the church were suddenly dropped into heaven, we would make a mess of the place in less than a week. How are we to avoid future disaster? Will heaven be like earth, only longer? Can we flunk out of heaven like many angels did?

If our damaged spirits were left in that condition, God’s hope for a family that would last for eternity would fail. Eventually, our imperfections would banish us all, leaving God alone again.

God promises that we will be transformed into the parade of character traits that was Jesus on earth. (“Glory” is a parade of character traits.) The question is when. If God waits until Judgment to fix everyone, then we have no success in this life. And, the spirit going to heaven would be so changed that I would not even know myself.

Instead, God promised the Christians of Corinth that they were in the process of being transformed while they were still on earth. Peter wrote that partaking of the divine nature was ours to be grasped, “having escaped” (past tense) the corruption of the world. The Christians of Colossae were told to “put on” Christ, something that they were to do on earth. One of the purposes of the Spirit that is given to every believer is to enable the transformation of our characters so that we take on the image of Jesus. The eternal family of God will be populated with those whose characters have been renewed.

We have all seen earthly families that have become divided because of the character flaws of the members. By fixing the character flaws, God’s plan for a big eternal family can be achieved.

God Desired a Family for Eternity.

The purpose of creation was to build an incubator for the key ingredient, faith. God desires a family, not worshippers, servants, or soldiers. We are not conquered by God; we are adopted into His family. Faith (trust) guarantees longevity both for spirits who have had a physical body and for spirits who have not. So, to keep in step with the purpose of creation, we each need to think as a spirit whose objective is to build a big family that will last. God’s purpose for people is not for their comfort or their optimum behavior, but for the development of their faith.