

The Story of His Glory



We love stories. This is true of children and adults in every culture of the world.

Stories are important because they are the lenses through which we see the world. According to the philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre, “I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question

‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’”¹

We make sense of both our personal and social identities through stories. If you want to really know someone, you ask them to tell their story.

Stories move us more deeply than mere explanations. Stories capture our imaginations, stir our hearts, and infuse our lives with meaning and significance.

In this little book, I want to tell you a story. It is the story of God’s gracious rescue of the world through the gift of his Son and the sending of his Spirit. It is a story of creation and judgment, crime and punishment, grace and glory. It is a story filled with drama, tension, power, beauty, and hope.

This story is true and is found in the narratives, laws, parables, poems, sermons, songs, visions, prophecies, oracles, and letters that make up the sixty-six books of Scripture. At the heart of this story is the revelation of God's glory in the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus.

This story, the story of God's glory, is the most important story in all of human history. And it is a story that can change your life.

This is that story in a nutshell.

The Creator God

The story begins with this simple sentence: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).

God is the Creator. This defines everything.

This means that your life is not an accident or a mere product of chance. The Creator God created everything. By his powerful and creative word, he spoke the universe and everything in it into existence (see Heb. 11:3).

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.
(John 1:3)

This truth has massive implications for us. If God is our Creator, then we are his creatures. We belong to him. A sculptor is the master of his clay. A painter is sovereign over her painting. An inventor retains the ownership “rights” over his

invention. And in a similar way, God is the supreme owner of the universe and everything in it. He is the “possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:19). He creates and sustains our lives.

In him we live and move and
have our being. (Acts 17:28)

We can no more exist without God, than a drawing can exist apart from the artist’s hand.

Made for His Glory

If God is our Creator, then we were made for his purposes and pleasure (see Rev. 4:11). This is, in fact, what Scripture declares. We were made for God’s glory and fame (see Isa. 43:7). Our purpose in life is to display the

worth and value of the God who designed and created us. As an old catechism says, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.”²

Made in God’s image (see Gen. 1:26–27), the intended role of every human being is to be God’s “image-bearer”—a portrayal of his character, a reflection of his glorious worth. This means human beings are like mirrors—made to reflect the beauty of another—the beauty of God.

God has also shown us what it looks like to reflect his glory in our lives. He has revealed this in his Word, beginning with his commands to the first human beings to “be fruitful, and multiply and fill the earth,” and to exercise dominion over

it (Gen. 1:28). We were created to glorify God by extending his kingly reign throughout the earth, through living in loving obedience to his good commands and in harmonious relationships with one another (see Gen. 2:15–25). A fuller description of how to live was contained in God’s divine law, which was revealed to his people Israel and expounded by teachers, sages, and prophets in the Old Testament.

Jesus summarized God’s law in two great commands: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind . . . [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:37–40). A life fully defined by

love—supreme and total love for God and others—is a God-glorifying life.

Humanity Shattered by Sin

But humanity has fallen. Adam and Eve, the first human beings, disobeyed God (see Gen. 3:1–7). Sin intruded into God's good creation and therefore death invaded human history.

Sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned. (Rom. 5:12)

Sin didn't stop with Adam. We have all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (see Rom. 3:23). We have traded the glory of the Creator God for created things and have loved and

worshiped the creation more than the Creator (see Rom. 1:23–25). We have forsaken God, “the fountain of living waters” for “broken cisterns that can hold no water” (Jer. 2:13). The hearts of men are idol factories,³ and we have all loved idols more than the living God. Idols can be self, sex, money, power, prestige, and pleasure, anything that holds greater significance in our lives than God.

Our problem is not merely sinful actions but sinful hearts. Jesus taught that it is “out of the abundance of the heart” that the mouth speaks (Matt. 12:34). As diseased trees will bear corrupt fruit, so diseased hearts bear the corrupt fruit of sinful attitudes, desires, motives, words, and behaviors.

Jesus said, “The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil” (Matt. 12:35). What is inside comes out.

But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. (Matt. 15:18–20)

We have not loved God supremely. And we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. By human standards, we may have lived respectable and moral lives, but deep in our hearts we know

that even our best behavior has often been driven by self-serving motives and tainted with sinful desires. The Scriptures remind us that “whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it” (James 2:10). It only takes one drop of cyanide to poison a glass of water, and similarly even one sin leaves us guilty before a holy God. Jesus’s teaching reached beyond behavior to the heart. He showed that hatred in the heart was murderous and lustful thoughts were adulterous (see Matt. 5:21–29).

In our sinful hearts and actions, we have committed mutiny and treason against the Creator God. We have provoked God’s holy wrath, sold

ourselves into slavery to sin, and rendered ourselves incapable of fulfilling our divinely given purpose to glorify God (see Rom. 2:4–5; 6:16). We are “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1), blinded by Satan “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4), and slaves of our passions and desires (see Eph. 2:2–3). If by creation man is a mirror made to reflect the radiance of God’s beauty and glory, then sin has shattered that mirror.

The Covenant God

But the Creator God is also a covenant God—meaning he is a God of promise. Even before man’s fall into sin, God had formed a plan of rescue (see Titus 1:2). He revealed that plan years ago to a man named Abraham.