

All Things Created for Christ

by Edward Payson

All things in the universe were created for Christ, to promote his glory and execute his will.

Scripture: Psalm 19:1, Psalm 148:5, Isaiah 43:7, John 1:3, Romans 11:36, 1 Corinthians 8:6, Ephesians 1:10, Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:2, Revelation 4:11

Topics: "Creation Theology", "Christ Exaltation"

Description

Edward Payson preaches about the profound significance of all things being created by and for Christ, emphasizing the divine purpose behind the creation of heaven, angels, hell, this world, and the human race. He delves into the exalted nature and glory of Christ as the central figure in creation, highlighting the interconnectedness of all beings and events with the cross of Christ. Payson urges believers to reflect on their purpose in being created for Christ, to devote their entire beings to glorifying Him, and to find gratitude and joy in fulfilling the great and benevolent purposes set by the Creator.

Transcript

All things were created by him and for him.-COLOSSIANS 1:16

By whom were all these worlds and beings made? is probably the first question, which a view of the created universe would excite in a seriously inquisitive mind. For what purpose and with what view were they created? would no less probably be the second. There are two inspired passages, one in the Old Testament. and the other in the New, which contain a direct answer to both these questions. In the Old Testament we are told, that Jehovah hath made all things for himself yea, even the wicked for the day of evil: and in the New, that all things were created by Christ and for Christ. At first view these passages appear to differ, not only in language, but in sentiment. The former asserts that Jehovah made all things. The latter declares that all things were created by Christ. The former assures us that Jehovah made all things for himself; the latter that all things were created for Christ. To those however who believe that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Jesus of the New, these apparently different assertions will appear perfectly consistent. They will recollect and readily assent to the declaration of our Lord, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; I and my Father are one: and will feel that the expression, Jehovah hath made all things for himself, is synonymous with the declaration in our text, All things were created by Christ and for him.

In discoursing on this passage we shall endeavor to illustrate particularly the general assertion, that all things were created for Christ. That none may suspect us of asserting more than our text will warrant, it

may be proper to quote the remaining part of the verse which contains it. "By him," says the apostle speaking of Christ, "were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." From this passage it appears that there are invisible as well as visible creatures; things in heaven, as well as things on earth. But whether visible or invisible, whether in heaven or on earth, they were all created for Christ; all created to promote his glory and subserve his purposes. This I shall now attempt to illustrate in several particulars.

I. Heaven was created for Christ. That there is a place called heaven, where the presence of God is specially manifested, and which is in a peculiar sense, the habitation of his holiness and glory, is abundantly taught by the inspired writers. Some, it is true, have supposed that heaven is only a state of happiness, and not a place; but the supposition may be easily shown to be groundless; for though God is every where, and though his presence would render any place a heaven to holy beings; yet the glorified body of Christ cannot be every where.

A body, however purified and refined, must be in some place; and the place, where now exists the glorified body of our Redeemer, is heaven. Agreeably St. Paul informs us, that Christ has entered into heaven itself; that he is seated at the right hand of God in the heavenly places; and he elsewhere speaks of desiring to depart and be with Christ. Our Saviour himself, in his last prayer says, Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory.

In addition to these proofs we may observe, that the bodies of Enoch and Elijah must have been in some place, since their removal from this world, and that the glorified bodies of the saints, which are to be raised at the last day, must be in some place after their resurrection. Heaven is therefore not only a state, but a place, as really a place as this world. And the same arguments which prove that there is such a place as heaven, prove that heaven was created on purpose for Christ.

God, considered as a pure spirit, cannot be said to be in one place, any more than in another. "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." Nay more, the Psalmist says, "If I make my bed in hell, thou art there." God therefore, considered as a spirit, had no occasion for a material heaven. Nor was there any need of such a place for the angels; for they also are spirits, and wherever they are, they behold the face of God, so that to them every place is heaven. But when God became incarnate in the person of Christ; when he became God manifest in the flesh, then a material heaven became necessary for the place of his residence; a place, to which his redeemed people might be brought, and where they might dwell with him and behold his glory.

Agreeably Christ speaks of heaven as a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world; and elsewhere he says to his disciples, I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myself that where I am there ye may be also, It appears then, that if God had not taken our nature into union With himself in the person of Christ; and if Christ had not redeemed the bodies of his people from the grave by his own death, there would have been no occasion for a material heaven; and of course, none would have been created.

It is not then for God simply considered, but for God manifest in the flesh, or in other words, for Jesus Christ, that heaven was originally formed. It was designed to be the royal city, the court, the palace, in which the King of Zion should dwell and reign with his redeemed people forever.

II. The angels were all created for Christ. When forming the great scheme of redemption, God was pleased to determine that he would employ the agency of created, but highly exalted spirits in carrying it on. With this view the angels were created. They were employed in worshipping Christ. When he brought the first begotten into the world he saith, let all the angels of God worship him. They are also employed by Christ in executing his purposes of love to his people. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?" It would perhaps be impossible, to point out a single work ever performed by them, which was not in some way connected with the work of redemption by Christ. Hence they are called his angels. Jesus Christ, says St. John, sent his angel. The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. Among these exalted spirits thus created to be the worshippers and servants of Christ, some were found who fell from their first estate. Of what particular sin they were guilty, we are not informed; but in some way or other, they refused to perform the duties required of them, and were in consequence cast down from heaven to hell. But though from angels they are transformed to devils, they are still subject to Christ; he holds them in a chain which they cannot break, and overrules for the advancement of his kingdom all their endeavors to destroy it. For instance, were it not for their temptations, Judas had probably never betrayed his master, nor the Jews crucified him. How much this event, which they designed should overthrow his kingdom, tended to advance it, or rather, how absolutely necessary it was to its advancement, you need not be told.

III. Hell was created for Christ. That hell is a place, as well as a state, is evident from the fact, that the bodies of the wicked, as well as their souls, are doomed to inhabit it. It will be apparent, in what respects this place was created for Christ, if we consider, that when he was appointed in the counsels of eternity to reign over his mediatorial kingdom, and to be the Judge of the world, it was foreseen that he would have rebellions, as well as loyal subjects; and that for the restraint and punishment of the rebellious, a prison would be necessary. Hell was therefore created for a prison, in which the enemies of Christ and of the peace and happiness of the universe should be confined. Hence its fires are said to be prepared for the wicked. In a word, it was designed. that in Christ and in the scheme of redemption by him, a full exhibition should be made of all the glorious perfections of the divine character. And as heaven was created to serve as a theatre for the display of the glories of divine mercy, love and grace. so hell was created for the display of divine justice and wrath.

IV. This world was created for Christ. It was created, in the first place, for the display of his natural perfections; for the display of creative wisdom and power to angelic minds. Accordingly we are told, that when he laid the foundation of the earth, these sons of God sung his praises together and shouted for joy. It was created, in the second place, to serve as a stage on which he might display to all intelligent creatures his moral perfections, and especially on which he might display the glories of an incarnate God, and act the wonders of the great scheme of redemption. It was also created to be a province of his dominions, the place where his mediatorial kingdom should be set up, and where his chosen people should be prepared by his grace for admission into his kingdom above. When all have served for all these purposes, when Christ shall have done with it, the end of its creation will be accomplished, and then the earth will of course be destroyed. Then the visible heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and earth with the works thereof shall be burnt up, and its destruction, no less than its creation, will display the perfection of its Creator

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V. The human race, and all the inferior inhabitants of the world, were created for Christ. They were created, in the first place, to show his ability to form different kinds and orders of beings. By forming the

inferior animals he displayed his power to create material beings, while his manifold wisdom appeared in the various qualities bestowed on them, and in their fitness for the various uses and elements for which they were designed. In the creation of man he farther showed his power to create beings who were both material and spiritual. The union of a material body with a spiritual, immortal soul, is a work in some respects more wonderful than any of his previous works of creation, and displays in a new and striking manner, that power by which he was enabled to subdue all things to himself To form such a being as man of such materials as the dust of the earth, and to endue him with a living soul, which should bear the image and likeness of God, must have appeared to angels impossible; and when they saw such a work accomplished, it must have given them new and enlarged views of the unlimited power and wisdom of its Author.

In the second place, the inhabitants of this world were created to be the subjects of Christ. It was intended that he should have a kingdom embracing all conceivable kinds or orders of created beings, from the highest archangel to the meanest insect, that he might have an opportunity of displaying his perfections in governing such a kingdom, in dispensing happiness suited to the capacities of the individuals of every kind, in adapting them all to their various uses and relations, and in causing all the parts of this complicated machine to work together for the accomplishment of his purposes, and in making them all the objects of his providential care.

In the third place, the human race was created, that Christ might display his infinite condescension in assuming their nature. In order to display this condescension in the most clear and striking manner, it was necessary that he should assume the nature of the lowest class of rational beings,-a nature subject to many evils and infirmities,-a nature, in which he might become visible, and act and speak in a visible manner. Had he taken the nature of angels into union with his own, it would have been a less wonderful act of condescension, nor could the act have been made equally apparent; for angels are spiritual beings, and the divine nature of Christ is spiritual, and the union of two beings purely spiritual could not be made to appear so evidently, as the union of a spiritual being with our nature which is partly material. We can conceive of God manifest in the flesh, much more clearly than of God manifest in an angel. We may farther observe, that a part of the designed display of Christ's condescension consisted in his becoming subject to hunger, thirst, weariness and pain, and in his dying, in the nature which he assumed. He was to appear in the likeness of frail, sinful flesh. But angels are subject to none of these infirmities. They can neither hunger, nor thirst, nor be weary, nor die. Christ could not therefore appear in the nature of a sinful angel as he could in the likeness of sinful flesh. Hence, in order to the full display of his condescension, it was necessary that rational beings should be created inferior to angels, or in other words, such beings as those who compose the human race.

In the fourth place, the human race was created that Christ might display all his perfections in their redemption. In this work is made the brightest and most wonderful display of those perfections which men or angels have ever seen. The glory of God appears most resplendent and full orb'd in the face of Jesus Christ. Power, wisdom, goodness, justice, truth, love, mercy, grace and faithfulness, here shine with united lustre in full brilliancy, nor can we determine which appears most glorious or lovely. In God's other works, some drops of that overflowing fountain, some rays from that infinite sun, are seen; but in the work of redemption, in the glorious gospel of the blessed God, the whole Deity, the whole fulness of the Godhead, flows out in one boundless tide; a tide which will forever fill to the brim every holy mind, and in which all holy beings will bathe with rapturous delight through eternity. Accordingly we are told, that by the church is made known to principalities in heavenly places, the manifold wisdom of God; that in the work of

redemption he made known the riches of his grace; that at the last day Christ shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Even the wicked, who refuse to submit to Christ, shall be made unwillingly to honor him; that the Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. He now causes their wrath to praise him, and restrains the remainder. At the judgment day, they will all be compelled to bow to Jesus, and confess that he is Lord; and he will show his wrath and make his power known in their everlasting destruction.

REFLECTIONS. 1. What exalted ideas is this subject suited to give us of the dignity and glory of Christ. The assertion, that all things were created by him, is sufficient to prove his divinity; for he who built all things, must be God. But when in addition to this, we are assured that all things were created for him, we have a proof of his divinity, which is if possible still more convincing; for supposing for a moment that God could and would employ a creature to perform the work of creation, can we suppose that he would permit that creature to create all things for himself, for his own pleasure and glory? Surely not. God has said, I am Jehovah, that is my name, and my glory I will not give to another. But if Christ be not God, all the divine glory is given to another. The glory of creating all things, of upholding all things, of governing all things, of redeeming and judging the world, is all given to Christ. Nay more, all things were created on purpose that the glory resulting from all might be given to Christ. If then Christ be not Jehovah, Jehovah's glory is all given to another, and nothing remains to himself. But view Christ as God manifest in the flesh and the difficulty vanishes. Then in honoring the Son, we honor the Father. Then we shall understand why all the inhabitants of heaven are represented as ascribing joint glories to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb. By him that sitteth on the throne, is meant the divine, and by the Lamb slain, the human nature of Christ. Both are inseparably united, and Christ's human nature is the temple in which Jehovah will dwell, and in which he will be worshipped by saints and angels through eternity.

2. From this subject we may learn, that, if we would view every object in its true light, and rightly estimate its nature and design, we must consider it with reference to Christ and his cross. To the cross of Christ all eternity has looked forward: to the cross of Christ all eternity will look back. The cross of Christ was, if I may so express it, the first object which existed in the divine mind; and with reference to this great object all other objects were created. With reference to the same object they are still preserved. With reference to the same object every event that takes place in heaven, earth and hell, is directed and overruled. Surely then, this object ought to engage our undivided attention. We ought to regard this world merely as a stage, on which the cross of Christ was to be erected, and the great drama of the crucifixion acted. We ought to regard all that it contains as only the scenes and draperies necessary for its exhibition. We ought to regard the celestial luminaries merely as lamps, by the light of which this stupendous spectacle may be beheld. We ought to view angels, men and devils as subordinate actors on the stage, and all the commotions and revolutions of the world as subservient to this one grand design. Separate any part of this creation, or any event that has ever taken place, from its relation to Christ, and it dwindles into insignificance. No sufficient reason can be assigned for its existence, and it appears to have been formed in vain. But when viewed as connected with him, every thing becomes important; every thing then appears to be a part of one grand, systematic, harmonious whole; a whole worthy of Him that formed it. It was such a view of things, which led the apostle to exclaim, God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. My friends, if we view the cross of Christ in the same light in which it was viewed by the apostle, we shall soon find it producing similar effects upon ourselves, and shall experience the emotions and adopt the language of that distinguished saint.

3. From this subject, my Christian friends, you may learn what reason you have for gratitude and joy. You, as well as all other objects and beings, were created for Christ. You were created on purpose to promote his glory and execute his will. Nay more, you were created on purpose to be his servants, his friends, his members; you were created that he might redeem you by his blood, sanctify you by his grace, dwell in you by his spirit, form in you his image, raise you to heaven by his power, and show forth the unsearchable riches of his glory in you as vessels of mercy, through eternity.

You were created that at the last day, Christ, your exalted Redeemer and Lord may be glorified in you as his work, and admired, as he will be, in all them that believe. You were created, that like so many planets, you may revolve around Christ the Sun of Righteousness, drink in light, and love, and glory, from his beams, and reflect those beams to the admiring eyes of fellow saints and angels forever and ever. Yes, these are the great and benevolent purposes for which you were created and destined; you were beloved with an everlasting love; and with loving kindness you were drawn to Christ, that these purposes might be fulfilled.

And they shall be all fulfilled. They are the purposes of him with whom designs and actions are the same; who never changes, and who will not, cannot, be disappointed. O then, what a gift is the gift of existence, endless existence, given for such purposes as these! What reason have you to rejoice in such a gift, and to bless the free, great and glorious Giver! Can you find love for any thing else? Can you find affections for any other object? Can you waste admiration on any thing besides?

If you were thus created for Christ, ought not all your powers and faculties to be devoted to him? Ought not your whole soul to be engrossed and swallowed up by this infinitely worthy object? Ought you not always to remember that you are not your own, that you are bought with a price, that you are bound by every tie to glorify Christ in your bodies and in your spirits which are his? This indeed you have covenanted and vowed to do. Come then, with willing minds, and hearts broken with contrition, bursting with admiration, and glowing with love and zeal, and renew your covenant engagements afresh, at Christ's table.

Come and see him, by whom and for whom all things were created, dying and dead for you. See his flesh freely offered as your food. See his blood no less freely presented to wash away your stains. Hear him, who is Lord and heir of all things, addressing you in the tenderest expressions of infinite, consolatory love, saying, "Come my sister, my spouse, to my table: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Drink, and remember your sorrows no more. Drink, and remember the man of sorrows, who sorrowed and died that your sorrows might cease.

Drink, and remember him, who is now preparing a mansion for you in heaven; who will soon come again and receive you to himself, and drink the fruit of the vine new with you in the kingdom of my Father forever. And while you remember this inestimable Friend, and listen to him thus addressing you, reply, "Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly." And until he shall come, exclaim with united voices, "Now unto him, who hath loved, and created, and redeemed us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory, and honor, and dominion, forever and ever."

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