

Summary: The Glory of God Theodicy maintains that evil is permitted so that God's full character—His justice, mercy, love, and power—may be manifest and glorified. Other, less effective attempts to reconcile the problem of evil focus on the suffering creature. This is understandable, as it is the suffering creatures who are expressing these arguments. However, if we focus rather on the glory of God, it becomes evident that only in a world with evil present can all of God's attributes be displayed. Scripture overtly states this premise a number of times. As Jonathan Edwards argues, God's goodness and mercy shine most brightly against the backdrop of sin and redemption. Irenaeus and Origen suggested that this process allows humanity to grow toward divine likeness. Philosophers like Aquinas and Plantinga affirm that permitting evil may be the only way to create a morally significant and glorifying creation.

1. Scriptural Foundations

- **Romans 5:8** – "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
- **John 9:3** – Jesus said, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."
- **Exodus 9:16** – "But for this purpose I have raised you up, to show you my power, so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth."
- **Ephesians 1:11-12** – "...according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will... to the praise of his glory."

2. Patristic Foundations

- **Augustine** (*Enchiridion 11*): "God judged it better to bring good out of evil than to allow no evil to exist."
- **Irenaeus** (*Against Heresies, Book IV*): God permits suffering so that humanity might mature and freely grow into the likeness of God.
- **Origen**: Evil is permitted to exist so that the soul may be purified, and God glorified in justice and mercy.

3. Philosophical Expressions

- **Thomas Aquinas** (*Summa Theologica I, Q.2, a.3, ad 1*): "God would not allow any evil to exist unless He could bring good out of it."
- Aquinas (*Summa Contra Gentiles III.71*): "The permission of evil tends to the good of the universe."
- **Jonathan Edwards** (*The End for Which God Created the World*): "The shining forth of God's glory would be very imperfect, both because the parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the other do, and also the glory of God's goodness, love, grace and mercy would not be seen at all, if it were not for sin."
- **Alvin Plantinga** (*God, Freedom, and Evil*): Argues that even an omnipotent God could not create a world with free creatures who never choose evil—evil is logically necessary for freedom.
- **Brian Davies & Eleonore Stump**: Emphasize that God's glory and justice are more fully manifest in a world that includes evil and redemption.