



Question: "Did God create sin?"

Answer: God created the universe in six days, but, originally, the universe had no sin—everything He made was “very good” (Genesis 1:31). Sin entered the cosmos due to an act of rebellion against God, not because God created sin.

We need to define “sin.” First John 3:4 says, “Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness.” Sin, therefore, is any violation of God’s holy law. Romans 3:23 says, “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” According to this verse, sin is anything (words, thoughts, actions, and motivations) that falls short of God’s glory and perfection. All of us sin. Romans 3:23 also teaches that we must know the character of God before we can accurately define sin, because His glory is the standard by which we measure it (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17). Without a perfect standard, there is no way to determine whether something is imperfect. Without the absolute standard of God’s glory, every word or action would be judged by the faulty, shifting standard of imperfect people. Every rule, law, and moral tenet would become a matter of opinion. And man’s opinion is as varied and changeable as the weather.

If a builder builds upon a foundation that is not square, he risks the integrity of the entire project. The building does not get better as it goes up; it gets weaker and more out of line. However, when the starting point is perfect, the rest of the structure will be sound. Moral foundations work the same way. Without God’s moral law, we have no way of knowing right from wrong. Sin is moving away from what is right. The further we get from God’s moral standard, the worse the sin becomes.

God created men and angels with a free will, and, if a being has a free will, there is at least the *potential* that he will choose badly. The potential for sin was a risk God took. He created human beings in His image, and, since He is free, humans were created free, too (Genesis 1:27). Free will involves the ability to choose, and, after God communicated the moral standard, He gave the man a true choice (Genesis 2:16). Adam chose disobedience. God did not tempt, coerce, or lure Adam into disobedience. James 1:13 says, “When tempted, no one should say, ‘God is tempting me.’ For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.” God allowed Adam the dignity of free choice and honored that choice with appropriate consequences (Romans 5:12).

God provided the opportunity to sin, but He did not create or instigate sin. Having the opportunity was good; without it, human beings would be little more than robots. God commands, pleads, and encourages us to follow Him (Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 12:28; 1 Samuel 15:22). He promises blessings, fellowship, and protection when we obey (Jeremiah 7:23; Psalm 115:11; Luke 11:28). But He does not chain us. God did not put a fence around the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve had freedom to choose obedience or disobedience. When they chose sin, they also chose the consequences that went with it (Genesis 3:16–24).

The same has been true for every human being since. The opportunity to sin is inherent in our freedom of choice. We can choose to seek God, which leads to righteous living (Jeremiah 29:13; 2 Timothy 2:19). Or we can choose to follow our own inclinations, which lead away from God (Proverbs 16:5). The Bible is clear that, whatever path we choose, consequences follow. We reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7). Some consequences are eternal. Matthew 25:46 says that those who do not follow Jesus “will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

God judges people (Ecclesiastes 12:14) and nations (Micah 5:15) who use their free will to rebel against Him. God did not and does not create sin, nor does He delight in punishing those who choose

to sin (Ezekiel 33:11). His desire is that all come to repentance and experience the blessing and joy of eternal life with Him (2 Peter 3:9).

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