

Chapter 1 : What Does the Bible Say About Free Will?

QUESTION. It seems to me that divine foreknowledge does not eliminate human free will, but several people that I know believe that it does. They say that if God knows what will happen tomorrow, that means it is an established fact, removing any free will choices one might make tomorrow.

It seems to me that divine foreknowledge does not eliminate human free will, but several people that I know believe that it does. They say that if God knows what will happen tomorrow, that means it is an established fact, removing any free will choices one might make tomorrow. What do you say about this? The following discussion of this question is from my recent book, *God Most High: What the Bible Says About God*, pp. The future has not happened yet; there is no future to be known. How do we answer this objection? First, we note that the Bible teaches divine foreknowledge. We cannot reject it simply because we cannot understand it. Second, we must remember the qualitative distinction between the transcendent, infinite Creator and us His finite creatures. We cannot limit God to the things that fall within the realm of human possibility. God in His infinite nature certainly can do things we cannot do and cannot understand. Wondering how God can know the yet-to-happen future is a legitimate query; but we will probably never be able to answer it to our satisfaction. It is the height of arrogance to reject such a glorious divine reality only because we cannot wrap our puny finite minds around it. Foreknowledge thus rules out free will in any true libertarian sense. Openness theologians make the same point: Here we flatly deny the validity of this claim, and declare that foreknowledge in no way negates the contingency or freeness of free-will choices. On the contrary, it is the events that cause the knowledge, whether it be present knowledge or foreknowledge. But this does not mean that any free-will choices involved in that event are somehow robbed of their freeness, just because the event has taken on the characteristic of certainty. Here is an example. There is no question about it. He is going to say such and such. My certainty as to what will happen on the video in no way affects the integrity of the sermon as originally preached. In fact, my certainty is dependent upon the sermon as preached. But His foreknowledge no more affects the contingency of the events than does my after-the-fact knowledge of a past event. It is in fact true that all future events, including free-will choices, are certain to happen as foreknown; but the foreknowledge is not what makes them certain; it only means that they are certain. Then what makes them certain? The acts themselves, as viewed by God from his perspective of eternity. All would agree that past events are certain. What makes them so? The simple fact that they have already happened the way they happened. The acts themselves have made them so. This same principle establishes the certainty of foreknown future events. But still the critic asks, if future choices are certain, how can they be free? The source of the confusion seems to be that both Calvinism and Open Theism are reading too much into the concept of certainty, wrongly equating it with necessity. Even before creation God had true foreknowledge prior knowledge, prescience of all future events, including all free-will choices. Even though this foreknowledge means that every future event is indeed certain to happen as foreknown, in itself the foreknowledge does not render any future event necessary and therefore does not negate free will.

Chapter 2 : Divine Foreknowledge and Human Free Will are Compatible | Theo-sophical Ruminations

*Believing firmly in God's foreknowledge, Luther wrote *The Bondage of the Will* to prove that the very idea of man's free will is a fallacy and an illusion. In fact, *Bondage* is full of fallacies, both logical and biblical, which I point out in *Sovereignty, Mercy, and Love*, my book in defense of God's character.*

Perhaps you can help? Thank you for your question. It is a question that has puzzled many and I cannot guarantee that I can bring any satisfaction. In fact, if you have been seeking for an answer for 25 years, I have to admit I have little hope of satisfying your puzzlement. However, that has not stopped me before. I will try my best to help. If it does not, then at least I have tried. First, let us establish two definitions and then try to determine the possible relationships between these two ideas. Since we have to begin somewhere, I will use my own definitions. The two words are foreknowledge and foreordination. Even if you disagree with my definitions, this will give us a basis for discussing the subject. The problem many have is how foreknowledge can be absolute while foreordination is not thus allowing for a level of free will. The thinking, if I understand it correctly, goes like this. For the sake of simplicity, we will say that he only has two possible choices which we will label choice A and choice B. John has no idea which he will choose but feels inwardly that he has complete power over the choice and can freely choose either A or B. However, God because of His foreknowledge already knows what choice John will make. He knows that John will in the end choose B. This is absolute knowledge and it will definitely happen. So, does John have a free will to choose either A or B as he feels or is he predetermined to choose B no matter what since this is what God knows will indeed happen? That is, is John foreordained to do what God knows he will do? This is a truly difficult problem. Some teach that God foreknows all future events because He has foreordained all future events. In this view, the two concepts cannot be separated. Despite attempts to avoid this by most proponents of this doctrine, it tends to fatalism. In fact, it is difficult to escape fatalistic conclusions if one equates foreknowledge with foreordination and believes them both. Most who have escaped it have done so by exercising the human ability to hold on to two contradictory ideas in one mind at the same time. Others now teach that God has not foreordained all future events because He does not know all future events. Much about the future is open and unknown. This doctrine has been recently renewed and is called the open view of God. It teaches that the future is open to many possibilities—even in the mind of God. This doctrine limits the greatness of God and is an attack on His person as the absolute God. This is a dangerous doctrine because the very integrity of God is based on His perfect foreknowledge Deuteronomy Finally, others as myself teach that God foreknows all future events but has not foreordained all future events. This view accepts that there are many things foreordained by God, but rejects that all things are predetermined by the will of God. Foreknowledge and foreordination are not the same in this view. I believe that one of the problems we have with distinguishing between foreknowledge and foreordination is our inability to grasp the mind of God- and this is not going to change. According to Isaiah That is, He dwells outside of and above time in an eternal state. Now, I cannot understand this but only accept it as true biblical teaching. However, we also know that God works in history; He deals with us in time. So, He inhabits eternity on one hand and consecutively deals with His creation in time. I cannot fully grasp this because these thoughts are too high for me. Therefore, God sees all of the events of history past, present, and future in one full sweep Deuteronomy Yet, He allows man to make many decisions on his own. Man has a free will to make his own decisions. Now just one aside: I cannot will myself to be President of the United States. No person can will themselves to be a yard taller than they are. Our will is fallen and often fails us. To will is present, but how to perform is not there Romans 7: Some have taken free will far beyond its biblical proportions and have fallen into their own errors. My answer to the problem is that foreknowledge is not the same as foreordination or predestination Romans 8: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied. Foreknowledge is not of itself causative. That is, to know a future action is not the same as causing that future action to happen. Therefore, foreknowledge is not to be confused with the predetermined will of God. God does have a predetermined will, but it does not determine every action of created beings. I have a level of foreknowledge. It is extremely limited and sometimes faulty. However, it is the closest I can come to the real thing and it will

have to do for purposes of illustration. What I mean is this: I mean I know it and I am seldom wrong when I know it. But it is still knowledge of what someone will do before they do it. I am sure you have the same experience on occasion. We know the ways of a wife, a child, or a friend to such an extent that we know what they will do in many cases. We know before they make their own decision and on occasion we know before they know what they will do. Now, let me ask you, does our foreknowledge of their decision in any way affect the decision they make? Has our foreknowledge removed their free will? To know what decision someone will make is not the same as forcing them to make that decision. From His eternal vantage point, God knows what we are going to do and what will happen to us in full. Some of these things He may even directly cause to happen. However, as He works in time, He can also allow us the freedom to make our own decisions in many cases though He knows what decision we will make. That does not require a fatalistic control of all things in the universe. John, from our earlier illustration, freely choose B as God from His eternal view knew he would do. Yet the Bible has examples of just this trait in God. David was of the line of Judah, but King Saul was of Benjamin. Evidently, Saul is an aberration in the royal line, possibly caused by the impatience of Israel to have a king. But God has Samuel to say a strange thing to Saul in 1 Samuel But now thy kingdom shall not continue: How could God say this when He knew that Saul would be and had to be replaced by a man from the tribe of Judah? I believe that God has an ability to act in time even though He knows all future things in perfection. He does this in a way that we cannot understand. It simply comes down to accepting everything God says about Himself without altering what we do not understand. I truly hope that you can get some peace about this puzzle. God does not want us to simply be puzzled. He wants us to believe all that He says. May the Lord bless you in your search for His truth.

Chapter 3 : GOD'S FOREKNOWLEDGE AND MAN'S FREE WILL | KNOWING GOD

Contents[Show]God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will (1)God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will (1) One correspondent writes, "Do you realize that Go.

Unconditional election to salvation only, with reprobation passing over [40] Conditional election in view of foreseen faith or unbelief Lutheranism[edit] Lutherans historically hold to unconditional election unto salvation. However, some do not believe that there are certain people that are predestined to salvation, but salvation is predestined for those who seek God. Unlike some Calvinists , Lutherans do not believe in a predestination to damnation. This publication by Luther was in response to the published treatise by Desiderius Erasmus in known as On Free Will. Luther based his views on Ephesians 2: For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. Predestination in Calvinism The Belgic Confession of affirmed that God "delivers and preserves" from perdition "all whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable council, of mere goodness hath elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without respect to their works" Article XVI. Calvinists believe that God picked those who he will save and bring with him to Heaven before the world was created. They also believe that those people God does not save will go to Hell. John Calvin thought people who were saved could never lose their salvation and the " elect " those God saved would know they were saved because of their actions. In this common, loose sense of the term, to affirm or to deny predestination has particular reference to the Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election. In the Calvinist interpretation of the Bible, this doctrine normally has only pastoral value related to the assurance of salvation and the absolution of salvation by grace alone. However, the philosophical implications of the doctrine of election and predestination are sometimes discussed beyond these systematic bounds. Under the topic of the doctrine of God theology proper , the predestinating decision of God cannot be contingent upon anything outside of himself, because all other things are dependent upon him for existence and meaning. Calvinists do not pretend to understand how this works; but they are insistent that the Scriptures teach both the sovereign control of God and the responsibility and freedom of human decisions. Some forms of Hyper-Calvinism have racial implications, as when Dutch Calvinist theologian Franciscus Gomarus however argued that Jews, because of their refusal to worship Jesus Christ, were members of the non-elect, as also argued by John Calvin himself, based on I John 2: Some Dutch settlers in South Africa argued that black people were sons of Ham, whom Noah had cursed to be slaves , according to Genesis 9: This justified racial hierarchy on earth, as well as racial segregation of congregations, but did not exclude blacks from being part of the elect. Other Calvinists vigorously objected to these arguments see Afrikaner Calvinism. Expressed sympathetically, the Calvinist doctrine is that God has mercy or withholds it, with particular consciousness of who are to be the recipients of mercy in Christ. Therefore, the particular persons are chosen, out of the total number of human beings, who will be rescued from enslavement to sin and the fear of death, and from punishment due to sin, to dwell forever in his presence. God also has particular consciousness of those who are passed over by his selection, who are without excuse for their rebellion against him, and will be judged for their sins. Infralapsarians interpret the biblical election of God to highlight his love 1 John 4: In spite of the division, many Calvinist theologians would consider the debate surrounding the infra- and supralapsarian positions one in which scant Scriptural evidence can be mustered in either direction, and that, at any rate, has little effect on the overall doctrine. Some Calvinists decline to describe the eternal decree of God in terms of a sequence of events or thoughts, and many caution against the simplifications involved in describing any action of God in speculative terms. Most make distinctions between the positive manner in which God chooses some to be recipients of grace, and the manner in which grace is consciously withheld so that some are destined for everlasting punishments. Debate concerning predestination according to the common usage concerns the destiny of the damned: Corporate election Arminians hold that God does not predetermine, but instead infallibly knows who will believe and perseveringly be saved. This view is known as conditional election , because it states that election is conditional on the one who wills to

have faith in God for salvation. Although God knows from the beginning of the world who will go where, the choice is still with the individual. The Dutch Calvinist theologian Franciscus Gomarus strongly opposed the views of Jacobus Arminius with his doctrine of supralapsarian predestination. Foreordination, an important doctrine of the LDS Church, [45] [46] teaches that during the pre-mortal existence, God selected "foreordained" particular people to fulfill certain missions "callings" during their mortal lives. It has long been an issue in Calvinist–Arminian debate. That is, God predestined sinful men for salvation. Therefore, according to this view, God is the ultimate cause, but not the proximate source or "author" of sin. Proponents also typically emphasize the grace and mercy of God toward all men, although teaching also that only some are predestined for salvation. In common English parlance, the doctrine of predestination often has particular reference to the doctrines of Calvinism. The version of predestination espoused by John Calvin, after whom Calvinism is named, is sometimes referred to as "double predestination" because in it God predestines some people for salvation i. Calvin himself defines predestination as "the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. Not all are created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestined to life or to death. That is, God decided to save, and to damn; he then determined the means by which that would be made possible. It is a matter of controversy whether or not Calvin himself held this view, but most scholars link him with the infralapsarian position. Double predestination[edit] Double predestination, or the double decree, is the doctrine that God actively reprobates, or decrees damnation of some, as well as salvation for those whom he has elected. Augustine made statements that on their own seem to teach such a doctrine, but in the context of his other writings it is not clear whether he held it. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. November Learn how and when to remove this template message Open theism advocates the non-traditional Arminian view of election that predestination is corporate. Or put differently, God chooses what type of individuals he will save. In other words, God chose from all eternity to save all those who would be found in Christ, by faith in God. Thus individuals have full freedom in terms of whether they become members of the church or not. Middle Knowledge[edit] Middle Knowledge is a concept that was developed by Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina, and exists under a doctrine called Molinism. It attempts to deal with the topic of predestination by reconciling Gods sovereign providence with the notion of libertarian free will. The concept of Middle Knowledge holds that God has a knowledge of true pre-volitional counterfactuals for all free creatures. That is, what any individual creature with a free will e. Gods knowledge of counterfactuals is reasoned to occur logically prior to his divine creative decree that is, prior to creation, and after his knowledge of necessary truths. Thus, Middle Knowledge holds that before the world was created, God knew what every existing creature capable of libertarian freedom e. It then holds that based on this information, God elected from a number of these possible worlds, the world most consistent with his ultimate will, which is the actual world that we live in. Based on this Middle Knowledge, God has the ability to actualise the world in which A is placed in a circumstance that he freely chooses to do what is consistent with Gods ultimate will. If God determined that the world most suited to his purposes is a world in which A would freely choose Y instead of Z, God can actualise a world in which Free Creature A finds himself in Circumstance B. In this way, Middle Knowledge is thought of by its proponents to be consistent with any theological doctrines that assert God as having divine providence and man having a libertarian freedom e. Calvinism, Catholicism, Lutheranism, and to offer a potential solution to the concerns that Gods providence somehow nullifies man from having true liberty in his choices.

Chapter 4 : God's Foreknowledge and The Free Will of Man | Art Licursi

either (1) foreknowledge (of human beings' future actions) does not exist; or (2) free will does not exist; or (3) the alleged logical relation between foreknowledge and the exercise of free will is mistaken (that is, foreknowledge is not incompatible with the exercise of free will).

This latter question appealed to the biblical narrative of the fiery serpents that attacked Israel because of their murmuring Num. This does not mean that God Himself and His counsel are without a temporal beginning and a temporal end. We are so totally controlled by time that we cannot even form an idea of divine eternity. Eternity means that we cannot speak of "when" God does something as the questioner does, for "when" implies time. We cannot speak of one work of God preceding another work of God in eternity, for one thing preceding another is something characteristic of time. All the decrees of God are eternally before His mind and they are so without change. The terms a foreknowledge, b election and c predestination refer to the same decree of God, but they look at that decree from different points of view. I have knowledge of a black walnut tree that once stood in my backyard. But I knew that tree only after the tree was there. God knew that black walnut tree before the tree was there. And so it is with all things. God is omniscient, not because He is able accurately to predict the future, but because He determines all that takes place in time in His eternal counsel. That purpose is to take His elect into everlasting fellowship with Himself in Jesus Christ. Predestination also refers to all that God determines to do to attain that goal. The question we face is this: Does fallen man have the natural ability to choose to do good or evil? We are not talking about Adam before he fell. Nor are we talking about man today who may choose to send you a letter or to refrain from sending it, to eat a T-bone steak for dinner or a hamburger, to buy a Ford car or a Mercedes. The question asked—and the question that has been asked a thousand times—is this: Does a totally depraved man possess the moral ability to choose to do that which pleases God and meets with His approval. Or, as it is so often said nowadays, does sinful man have the spiritual ability to accept the salvation offered him in the gospel? The question is an ancient one. In those days, the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians taught that man had a free will and that God saved only those who wanted to be saved by their alleged free will. Augustine most emphatically denied it. The Roman Catholic Church most emphatically taught it and killed those who denied it. All the Reformers, without exception, denied free will, as did the Reformed and Presbyterian churches throughout Europe. The Arminians taught it; the Synod of Dordt, representing the Reformed churches in the whole of Europe denied it. And so it is today: Let those who teach free will admit that they are in doctrinal agreement with the Roman Catholic Church on this point. So important was the question that Martin Luther, whom we esteem as a great Reformer, wrote a book against Erasmus, a humanistic representative of Roman Catholicism, called *The Bondage of the Will*. Luther understood the importance of the question. In answering Erasmus, Luther complimented him on dealing with the one, most important and most crucial, issue that divided the Reformers from Rome. If Erasmus was right, Luther insisted, there was no reason to reform the church and split from Rome. It is well, as the questioner suggests, that we understand that other crucial doctrines are involved. Some of the most important are: The question is of utmost importance. It divides between orthodox, believing Christians and heretical theologians who stand outside the stream of the church of Christ here on earth. Let no man belittle the issue. This includes his will: I have recently completed an extensive study of the teachings of the church on this very question. I cannot duplicate the results of that research here. The evidence is conclusive: The church has always taught and one need only read its confessions to see this that man is totally depraved; that Christ died only for His elect people who were given Him of the Father; that God loves His people, but hates the wicked; that God saves a people chosen from all eternity and bestows on them, and on them only, His grace; that His grace cannot be resisted; that those chosen by God will be saved so that all of them will live forever in covenant communion with the Triune God Ps. I shall deal with the passage in Numbers 21 to which the questioner calls our attention in the next issue. But I want to make a few more remarks in this connection. The question is not to be answered in terms of what we would like or what we think ought to happen. The question is ultimately—and it is a question every one of us has to answer, for there is no escaping it—Do

you choose to go along with the Roman Catholic Church on this crucial question? Do you want to join in the raucous cacophony of far and away the majority of the church world that thinks it knows better than God what He ought to do? Do you want a God who waits upon the will of man to decide whether or not to be saved? Do you want a Christ whose death is so ineffectual that it cannot save those for whom He died? Must Christ everlastingly wring His hands in despair that so many whom He loved and wanted to save actually go to hell? I do not want that kind of God or that kind of Christ. He cannot do me any good. If even an iota of this glorious work is left to me, I shall perish. I do not frustrate the grace of God:

Chapter 5 : How does God's sovereignty work together with free will?

(1) The first concentrated on God's foreknowledge, arguing that to believe in foreknowledge is foolishness, for it implies contradictions in God Himself that are beyond resolution. (2) The second, a series of questions, had to do more with man's free will.

Quite honestly, I do not see this as being a problem at all. Analogy By analogy, knowing what will happen does not mean that we are preventing or causing that thing to happen. The sun will rise tomorrow. I am not causing it to rise nor am I preventing it from rising by knowing that it will happen. My knowing it ahead of time does not restrict my child from making a free choice when the time comes. My child is free to make a choice and knowing the choice has no effect upon her when she makes it. It means that God simply knows what we have chosen to do ahead of time. In this, our natural ability to make another choice has not been removed any more than my choice of what to write inside the parenthesis hello was removed by God who knew I would put the word "hello" in the parentheses before the universe was made. Before typing the word "hello," I pondered which word to write. My pondering was my doing and the choice was mine. How then was I somehow restricted in freedom when choosing what to write if God knew what I was going to do? Time Part of the issue here is the nature of time. If the future exists for God even as the present does, then God is consistently in all places at all times and is not restricted by time. This would mean that time was not a part of His nature to which God is subject, and that God is not a linear entity; that is, it would mean that God is not restricted to operating in our time realm and is not restricted to the present only. If God is not restricted to existence in the present, our present, then the future is known by God because God indwells the future as well as the present and the past. This would mean that our future choices, as free as they are, are simply known by God. Again, our ability to choose is not altered or lessened by God existing in the future and knowing what we freely choose. It just means that God can see what we will freely choose -- because that is what we freely choose -- and knows what it is. Part of the problem in Open Theism is that by restricting God to the present only, His existence is defined in such a way as to imply that time is part of His nature and that He is restricted to it. The question is whether or not this is logical as well as biblical. For an analysis of the logic of the position, please see A logical refutation of open theism. Scripture Scripturally, God inhabits eternity. Rather, the Bible tells us that God is eternal. We can, however, note that the Bible teaches that God has no beginning or end. In other words, God has no beginning, and since "beginning" deals with an event in time, God is outside of time. Conclusion There is no logical reason to claim that if God knows what choices we are going to make that it means we are not free. It still means that the free choices we will make are free -- they are just known ahead of time by God. If we choose something different, then that choice will have been eternally known by God. Furthermore, this knowledge by God does not alter our nature in that it does not change what we are -- free to make choices. In fact, since He has eternally known what all our free choices will be, He has ordained history to come to the conclusion that He wishes including and incorporating our choices into His divine plan: Because God always knows all things: God is greater than our heart, and knows all things," 1 John 3: This is called Libertarian free will, that a person is equally able to make choices between options independent of pressures or constraints from external or internal causes. Compatibilist free will holds that a person can choose only that which is consistent with his nature. Therefore, for example, a person who is a slave to sin Rom. There is much debate on these issues and, depending on which side you lean, your interpretation of scripture will be affected.

Chapter 6 : God's Foreknowledge in the Bible | Jack Cottrell

*God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will: [Richard Rice] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This book is a thought-provoking study of some issues concerning the historic Calvinist/Arminian debate.*

There is probably little in Christianity as controversial as whether or not God knew all the future details of our world. Was our human history laid out even before it started? Are our past, present, and future following a precise path toward a preplanned destiny? If so, is it even possible for humans to exercise free will? And if every detail of the future of both humans and earthly events was pre-known, of what value is prayer? Such thoughts will be the focus of this study. Simply, it is an intuition or a type of extrasensory perception. This indicates that it is the process or manner that is foreknown, not the individual. From known events, we foreknow that the sun will rise in the morning. We can even detail this event to the precise time and explain all the astronomical events that will make this occur. And given our acquired knowledge of human reactions, we can foreknow, with some certainty, how our spouse or children or friend will behave in relation to something we do, or someone else does to them. We can even predict what strangers will do, in certain situations. We have learned that there are certain particular reactions people will have to everything and, in a small way, we plan every day foreknowing the outcome to our efforts. Corporations are well trained in foreknowing events and situations. Retailers have studied population trends and psychology and have applied their knowledge to advertising and marketing. They are able to predict how people will react to their efforts and actually plan and produce based on their foreknowledge. Large governments are fairly accurate in foreknowing what will happen in certain events. Wars are sometimes started because of this. And if a war is started by one country against another, do we not, as individuals, foreknow that emotions will rise, human lives will be lost, economies will tumble, and standards of living will be lowered. In a popular science fiction novel titled *Foundation*, a mathematician developed a statistical science called *psychohistory*. This science, based on accumulated knowledge from the past, could actually predict the probability of future events. It was based upon known reactions to particular happenings; the more information that was known, the more accurate the prediction. *Psychohistory* foretold of wars, the decline and fall of civilizations, and other important trends hundreds of years, or millennia, in advance. God has a divine plan for humankind and, for the overall unfolding of this plan, it is this kind of foreknowledge that he uses. God created a physically perfect human with certain predictable attributes; he foreknew at the time of creation the direction humans would take. He prepared the way and means for humans to continue the process of education needed to reach total moral perfection through trial and error and we are now in the midst of that schooling. Because God foreknows the way, he foreknows the outcome, but because he knows does not mean he is responsible. He is certain of what general trends and events will happen, but does not determine what form these trends and events will take. Other than for those persons who have made the choice to serve God, there is no foreknowledge of individuals necessary. The issue is not whether or not God has the ability to foreknow everything in detail, but whether or not he chooses to do so. This is evident from a number of scriptural references. There are other examples, but these prove that God is selective in what he foreknows. Narrowing it down and applied only to individuals elected for salvation is a man-made idea. Concerning these ideas of foreknowledge and predestination, a number of questions are raised: Do humans really have free will? Does God intervene and force events to his favor? Are certain individuals actually predestined toward good, and others toward evil? Do We Have Free Will? The Bible states that it is impossible for God to lie Hebrews. The statement in Hebrews is a promise and guarantee, and since God is unchanging see Malachi 3: So, we can, therefore, believe God when he states that humankind has free will to choose right and wrong. If humans have the ability to choose, then we alone are responsible for what happens. No one in any Christian religion will argue about who created the world in which we live. So that the world exists is not the issue, it is what happens in this world that is open to question. One scholar, John McManners, stated the situation accurately: But the main line of Christian belief has affirmed the freedom of human beings. In creating a human world, God has not only created something other than himself but has created something with a genuine measure of independence over against himself.

This is part of what is meant by saying that men and women have been created in the image of God. Although as creatures they are of a totally different level of being from the self-existent God, they do have an affinity with God. He chose individuals for his purposes Judges 2: He will alter the course of events to a redemptive conclusion. God chooses individuals for certain tasks in his plan, but how he does so depends, not only upon events leading up to the appearance of that individual, but also upon the choices being made by the individual during their life time. Well, he can tell much about us, from things besides reading our DNA. He can observe what we do and how we live. He knows what is in our thoughts and what is in our hearts from the prayers righteous people send to him, because he hears them. It is quite possible, although speculative to assume, that although God knew what his plan would be when the promised seed was mentioned in Genesis 3: Again, God foretold nearly two centuries beforehand that he would use a conqueror named Cyrus to affect the release of the Jews from Babylon Isaiah Possibly, God stated the name beforehand to let everyone know his abilities, but did not know who the individual would be. These examples are, agreeably, imperfect human opinions and may involve some fallible concepts. Only Features Foreknown It is true that, in the beginning, God looked at his human creation and was pleased, but this should not imply that he considered his creation was complete. Could it be that God, in planning the human species, created Adam and Eve knowing that they would fail the test of obedience and actually expected them to fail, because they were not yet finished creatures with the experience to make a correct or proper choice? Were they actually designed to fail so that future humanity could complete their own education? Did he predetermine the general outline of all that would lead to the completed, self-educated, and perfect human race still to come? Is that why he rested on the seventh day, to watch as humanity worked through their education process? Therefore, predestination is not about specifics. God gave us free will to make choices and these choices were not predetermined for each individual, but God knew how the species as a whole would react to the events of his plan. God, therefore, does not cause everything, as a religious journal pointed out more than a hundred years ago. He grants us the free will to do as we please within certain broad limits. Yet his wisdom and power are so magnificent that he can, if he so decides, anticipate, counteract, and overrule the various affairs of mankind, so they will work together for what he has planned. Click here to read. The Complete Biblical Library, The New Testament Study Bible: The Complete Biblical Library, , p. Asimov, Isaac, Foundation, New York: The Complete Biblical Library, , pp. Oxford University Press, , p.

Chapter 7 : God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will (2)

Fatalism is the thesis that human acts occur by necessity and hence are unfree. Theological fatalism is the thesis that infallible foreknowledge of a human act makes the act necessary and hence unfree.

Remember, He had no beginning and foreknowledge only exists prior to a beginning. Another questioner has obviously given the matter considerable thought, but continues to have some problems with the idea of foreknowledge. What is that foreknowledge? For those He foreknew. What did God foreknow? If the elect are chosen before the foundation of the world outside of foreknowledge of the individual, then, at what point were they ever condemned? I do not see how one can be simultaneously condemned and saved at the same time. How can this be a picture of Christ in the Calvinist eye, when looking is an act of conscience and of will? This cannot be an accurate picture, if the consequences are not applied in the same manner. The serpent was never kept away from those who were bitten so that [they] would never be able to look upon it. If salvation is not available to those who are bitten, then it is not an accurate picture. First of all, we ought to be sure of what the Bible means by "foreknowledge. It is found only in Acts 2: Its verb cognate, "foreknow," is used only in Romans 8: The word "foreknowledge" is, in fact, identified with His counsel. In the Middle Ages, many theologians, committed as they were to the Pelagianism of Rome, defined foreknowledge in the sense of prediction. But the heresy arose again. It arose in the hypothetical universalism of the Amyraldians in France and in the Arminian heresy of Jacobus Arminius and his followers in the Netherlands. Amyraldianism was condemned in the Formula Consensus Helvetica and by the Westminster Assembly s , although the Amyraldian position or views like it were defended by a few delegates. The Arminian position was condemned by the Synod of Dort. The Scottish Confession says, "So that the cause of good works we confess to be not our free will, but the Spirit of the Lord Jesus â€œ!" Art. All the other Reformed confessions teach the same truth: It is faithfulness to the confessions to confess and maintain these truths, and to oppose the heresies that basically arose out of Rome. That most of the church today is unfaithful to her heritage makes no difference; these churches have simply repudiated what lies at the heart of Reformation thought. In doing so, they have rejected Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, Knox and all the later Reformed theologians. Defenders of later heresies must not come up with their denials of foreknowledge, predestination and election, along with their notions of free will and attempt to palm this off on the church as the truth of the Scriptures. They will soon learn that they stand outside the stream of biblical thought. If they claim that the Reformation came with novelties, let them go back to Augustine and Gottschalk c. We will enter into the subject itself more completely in the next article and answer some of the objections of the gainsayers. I urge our readers to save this issue of theNews so that you can refer to it when the next issue comes out to refresh your memories of the questions we are dealing with.

Chapter 8 : God's Foreknowledge and Man's Free Will (1)

Does the Bible really say that once upon a time, "in the beginning," God knew (or, worse yet, planned) every future event of human history? If so, it begs co.

What does the foreknowledge of God mean? What is it, and how does it relate to the free will of human beings? Questions like these form the basis of great debate theologically and philosophically about the omniscience of God and the life of a human being. To what extent does God know the future, exercise control over it all the while human beings are morally responsible for their actions? This apparent paradox or contradiction has challenged people for centuries. In both instances, Acts 2: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. The prefix "pro" means "before. Thus the term "prognosis" simply means "foreknowledge. So while the normal meaning in English is to have advance knowledge of future events and circumstances, the biblical context implies an additional sense of divine direction or control. Can the two ideas, a God is infallible and knows the future and b human beings have free will, coexist or are they at odds with each other? Christians fall into two camps when considering this theological dilemma: Compatibilists believe that "a" and "b" are compatible and do not contradict each other. Incompatibilists believe that "a" and "b" are incompatible. Either "a" or "b" is false; either God has limited infallibility of the future or human beings do not have free will. The Bible does not say explicitly how God knows the future, but several theories have been debated over the centuries. Theory How does God know the future? Compatible with human beings having free choice? Foreknowledge is a simple awareness of the future and does not require any inductive or deductive reasoning. God simply knows the future and what human beings will do. Human beings have free will and God already knows what a person will do. God is not the cause or agent of the actions of man. Human beings have libertarian free will in which one could make any choice or not at all. Deterministic Foreknowledge God determines all future events by His sovereign will. God is in complete control of all events that occur and will occur in the future. God has infallible knowledge of the future, and human beings do not have libertarian free will. Human beings, in a sense, have free choice, because they chose according to their desires and moral nature. Open Theism God only knows what He intends to do in the future independent of what human beings will do. God has limited infallible knowledge of the future; he does not know what human beings will freely do. Human beings have libertarian free will in which one has complete freedom to choose or not choose. This is knowledge of all possibilities and truths. This is knowledge of what would happen in all possibilities. For example, if Joe was placed in these circumstances, he will freely choose to do this. If Joe were to be placed in another set of circumstances, he would freely do that. This is knowledge of the future. God knows what will happen, and what would happen under any and all possible circumstances in the future. Human beings can freely make choices but their choices are determined by their circumstances and nature. Theory Implications Towards Salvation Perceptual Foreknowledge God knows, before a human being is born, whether that person will freely choose to believe in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. Deterministic Foreknowledge God chose or determined, before a human being is born, whether that person will be saved by Jesus Christ. In this theory, God is the primary cause of salvation. In this theory, man is the primary cause of salvation. Middle Knowledge God chose, before a human being is born, whether that person will receive conditions that will cause him to freely choose to believe in the saving grace of Jesus Christ. In this theory, God is sovereign in the process of salvation but both God and man are causes of salvation. Perceptual Foreknowledge is seen as the traditional Arminian perspective. Deterministic Foreknowledge is seen as the traditional Calvinism perspective. All four of these theories are worthwhile to explore and understand their biblical basis. However be mindful to study the Scriptures through exegesis and allow the biblical truth to emerge, rather than a philosophical exercise to which the biblical text is used to support the logic of human beings. Faith working by love. Unhesitating conviction of the truth of the inspired words, unshakeable by any argument either based on the plea of physical necessity or masquerading in the guise of piety. To hold fast by such conviction in the strength of what Scripture says and to dare neither to set it at nought nor to add to it.

Chapter 9 : Foreknowledge and Free Will (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Others emphasize free will to the point of God not having complete control and/or knowledge of all things. Neither of these positions is biblical. The truth is that God does not violate our wills by choosing us and redeeming us.

This is a core question since apart of free-will, man would be but an automaton or robot. How can God be Omnipotent all powerful and we still have free-will to perform in accord or not? If God foreknew men would crucify Jesus Christ Acts 2: From the human perspective, many issues are difficult to fathom. In the end, the Biblical events we read really do not end in failure. Granted, God knew how events would turn out negatively, and yet, He foresightedly used those events to accomplish His will. When considered in light of the overall scheme of things, these events were not failures. Paul wrote in 1 Cor. Israel started in Egypt with Jacob and about 70 others cf. That is why God put up with the Amorites for so long. Man wanted to rid himself of Jesus Christ and thus he conspired to murder Jesus Christ. This is the wisdom of God. He took all this into account, and actually outsmarted Satan. Jesus Christ had to come to earth and be incarnated in order to fulfill those verses; performing miracles, and teaching the doctrine that those miracles communicated. Ultimately, Jesus Christ had to die. Jesus Christ had to die, and God simply used the wickedness of man to bring it to pass see Psa. This is evident in N. He taketh away the first covenant of Law , that he may establish the second covenant. That is why God became a man: He needed blood to offer and make atonement for the sins of man. The Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 3: God saw these, the end results of Calvary, and that is why He let it fall out like that. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were fully blessed of God. Sin, suffering, and death were unknown. After craftily asking Eve if God really said not to eat of every tree, Satan observed Eve depart even further from the truth. God of course is the ultimate free will. Once Adam ate, they lost that perfect image identity, and all its provisions. They exercised their free will and chose wrong. He certainly did not cause them to do wrong, God does not cause anyone to sin! God did not force them to do anything. They did not want to be water baptized, they did not want to repent, they did not want to confess their sins like Moses instructed Israel in Lev. If they wanted to die in their sins and go to eternal destruction; God valued freedom to the extent that He let them make their choice. What Jesus said to the Jews in John 5: They did not want salvation from their sins. They refused to have Jesus Christ. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would or willed not! The verse above is in the context of the time of the Antichrist, during the future events of the seven-year Tribulation. That Man died to save sinners; you feel you are a sinner; He died to save you. The Lord is always beckoning the foreknown ones to come to Him by His Spirit speaking into their hearts, individually. You can make comments or ask questions using this form. I welcome your questions and comments for discussion but I will not engage in arguments with anyone. We can always agree to disagree.