

Open Theism (part 1)

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[0:00] Several years ago, it's probably been three years ago now, I walked into the Breeman Public Library Library, as I've done on many occasions. And when you walk in the front door there of the library, there's a bookshelf with new arrivals, new books, new books on tape, on display there.

And when I walked in on this particular day, I saw this book. It's called, Is God to Blame? Beyond Pat Answers to the Problem of Suffering.

And so I thought, well, that looks very interesting, given what I believe about the sovereignty of God in all things. What is this book saying about the matter? And so I picked it up, and I noticed immediately that it was written by one Gregory Boyd.

And Greg Boyd, I recognized as a proponent of what is called open theism. And we want to talk a little bit about open theism today, but it's a view that believes that God is open to the future, because He doesn't know what is going to come to pass.

He doesn't know it. He is not fully in control of it, and so He is open to it. And so it's called open theism. And theism being a view about God, this is an open theism.

[1:23] And to say the very least, I was extremely troubled to find a book openly promoting this view of God, right? And it wasn't just tucked away back in the stacks in the library.

It was on the shelf for everybody to see right as they come in the door, because it was a new arrival. And so I immediately checked it out so that no one would see it. And I wanted to see what Mr. Boyd had to say.

And since then, it's been moved back to the stacks, and I had to go hunting for it to find it this time. And even when I punched in suffering on the computer, it didn't pull up this title, for which I was thankful.

But it's still there. This is still available. This is the Bremen Public Library's copy of Is God to Blame? And I tell you that so that you'll understand that what we're about to discuss isn't an issue that is so far out there that it's completely irrelevant to our lives.

No, it's alive and well, right here in rural northern Indiana, of all places. Open theism has come to Bremen, even if it's just in the form of a library book.

[2:30] It's here. You might recall that in our study of the book of Jonah, we ran across an interesting detail in God's dealings with the city of Nineveh.

When the people of Nineveh repent of their sins, remember Jonah has come into the city, and he's proclaimed a very simple message. Forty more days, and Nineveh will be destroyed.

That's the message from God. Forty days, and Nineveh will be destroyed. There's no qualifications. There's no clauses, exception clauses to it.

They will be destroyed. But when Nineveh repents, we're told in the text that God relented. The NIV translates it, God had compassion.

But that's a possible translation. More likely, it said that God relented and did not bring upon them the destruction. He had threatened. That word can be translated, God was sorry.

[3:33] God was grieved. God changed his mind. You could even almost translate it. Or repented of the destruction that he had promised to bring on Nineveh. And that at least raises the question, did God know what the Ninevites' response would be?

It seems to indicate to us, maybe on the surface of things, that you read that, and God changed his mind. God didn't anticipate. He didn't know that the Ninevites were going to repent.

So he just said, judgment's coming. But then when they repented, oh, well, there's a surprise to God. And so, I think I'll change my mind, and I'll relent, and I'll have mercy on the people of Nineveh.

That's how some people would take that particular word, God relented. God repented of the destruction he had threatened. And so, we can ask the question, is God open to the future? And so, then he responds, depending on what happens. He's not sure what's going to happen. And so, when something happens, then he has to respond to it. Because he didn't know what was going to happen.

[4:38] Well, I hope that you're not convinced by my rather feeble attempt to persuade you that God doesn't know the future of the Ninevites when he proclaimed that to them. But that is how open theists would interpret that passage.

And I'm going to leave you hanging today. We're going to have to come back to the passage in Jonah later. But I want to tell you at least why we're coming to this subject today. It's right here in Bremen.

We ran across it in the book of Jonah, at least the possibility of it. And that's the sort of text that open theists like to use to defend their position, that God doesn't really know the future.

And we're going to come back to Jonah and to other texts like it. And explain them and understand them more fully. But for now, we just want to ask the question, does God know the future?

Does God's... Did somebody say yes back there? He does. Yes, that's right. Does God's sovereign will encompass everything?

[5:37] Or are there some unexpected things like the repentance of the Ninevites that take God by surprise? You all have been taught that God willed all things to happen and bring things to pass according to that will, according to his plan.

Is that right? But, unequivocally, yes. God did ordain all things that will come to pass. And he does bring them to pass. And so he knows what's going to come to pass.

Because he planned it. And he's bringing it about. Because he is a sovereign God who is on the throne. But, errors creep into the church. And not just into far out wings of the church.

And far out branches of the church. And cults. Errors creep into orthodox evangelical churches. And begin to take root. And they are sometimes very dangerous.

And open theism is one of those very dangerous teachings that is coming into the church. So this morning we're going to take a look at open theism. What it is.

[6:40] What it teaches. How far spread it is. How predominant it is. Among evangelicals. I want you all to be persuaded that we're not just up here as an academic exercise to learn about this doctrine and refute it.

This is something that's very real. It's very alive. It's very much present in churches today. And we must be on guard against it. As reformed Christians.

Reformed believers. One of the doctrines we hold most dear is God's divine foreknowledge and his sovereignty. We believe that he ordained all things that will come to pass.

And since he ordained them, he of course knows then beforehand what they're going to be. What will happen. Our confession of faith. The London Baptist 1689 confession of faith makes this abundantly clear.

I'll just read you one paragraph. This is from chapter 5 of God's divine providence. And this is the first paragraph. God, who in infinite power and wisdom, has created all things.

[7:49] You ask your kids, what else did God make? Hopefully they'll say all things. God has created all things. He upholds, directs, controls, and governs them.

Both animate and inanimate. Great and small. By a providence, supremely wise and holy. And in accordance with his infallible foreknowledge.

And the free and immutable decisions of his will. And it goes on from there. He fulfills the purposes for which he created them. And the result is so that he might be praised and glorified.

But you notice that God governs all things, upholds all things, by a providence, supremely wise and holy in accordance with his infallible foreknowledge. And the free and immutable decisions of his will.

God's foreknowledge is infallible. There is no mistake in God's foreknowledge. Everything that God knows does come to pass. Again, because he ordained it to be so. It is his plan.

[8:49] Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 11 says, That's not a statement about a God who doesn't know the future and isn't sure and isn't bringing it to pass because he doesn't know.

It's a statement that this is a sovereign God that does know all things because he did plan them. Because he is bringing them to pass according to his good and perfect plan.

Now, this isn't something that just reformed Christians believe. That God knows the future. Our Arminian brethren affirmed the foreknowledge of God. They believe that God knows the future. They put more of an emphasis on the free will of man. That man makes a choice and God doesn't directly intervene to direct that choice. But God still knows what choice they are going to make. He knows what the outcome is going to be. And so, Arminians are a little bit inconsistent. And so, these advocates of free will theism or open theism come along and say, Well, that's inconsistent. [9 : 59] If God knows the future, then it's because he is bringing it to pass. Instead of becoming Calvinist, becoming reformed and affirming both, that God knows the future and brings it to pass, they deny both.

Neither does God bring it to pass, nor does he even know it. We have common ground here with our Arminian friends. This isn't just an attack on reformed Christianity. It's an attack on orthodox Christianity. This is something that's much bigger than just the reformed Christians in the world. Denying that God knows the future is a denial of the God of the Bible. It's been a belief, not only, again, of those who are reformed, but of Christians as a whole since the New Testament times. But this doctrine is under attack anyway.

Anyway, from these proponents of open theism, it's also known, I'll probably use these terms interchangeably, so I'll tell you all the names of it. Open theism, free will theism, the openness of God, openness theology, all of these views, these are all names for the same thing, that God does not sovereignly control the future actions of his creation, and neither does he know their choices or what they will be.

[11 : 16] God is as surprised as we are when things happen, because he didn't know them, just like we didn't know what was going to happen.

And so to believe truly in the free will of men, that men are making choices that truly are free, you have to deny God's foreknowledge, is their assertion.

That's the view of this book of Gregory Boyd's. I want to read you some quotes from other open theists, so you'll know I'm not making this up.

I want you to hear it right from their own lips. So I'm trying to avoid today something that's quite easy to do when you're teaching about a view that you don't agree with.

It's easy to set up what we call a straw man. You caricature their position, and then you tear down the straw man, and you haven't really addressed their actual position, which is, I found, one of the things that open theists do with traditional theists like us.

[12 : 21] They set up something of a straw man. They take an element of truth, but then they build on it things that we don't actually believe and tear that down. I want to avoid the same mistake, and that's very difficult to do with just a few quotations and a brief summary of what they believe, but I want to be accurate and fair in presenting what they believe.

So I'm going to give it to you straight from them. First of all, from Clark Pinnock. Clark Pinnock was once a conservative. He was an orthodox evangelical, like you and I, and he has since departed from orthodoxy and is teaching this view of God that says he's open to the future.

And he published or he edited this book. It's a collection of articles on this viewpoint called The Grace of God and the Will of Man. Sounds like a good title.

Grace of God and the Will of Man. We like to talk about those things and how they fit together. You run across this book on your shelf at the bookstore. You check the publisher, Bethany House Publishers, Orthodox Evangelical Publishing House.

Grace of God, Will of Man, Clark Pinnock. Used to be a trustworthy name. So you pick it up, take it home, and you open it up. And what do you find? Here's how he poses the question in the introduction.

[13 : 34] Is God the absolute monarch who always gets his way? Or is God rather the loving parent who is sensitive to our needs even when we disappoint him and frustrate some of his plans?

He's setting up a straw man already. It just makes you cringe a little bit. He paints our view of God as that he's an absolute monarch who always gets his way.

And then sets that in contrast with a loving parent who's sensitive to our needs. Well, God is both. And so don't let him fool you with his dichotomy. Is he one or the other?

But then notice what he says. Is he sensitive to our needs even when we disappoint him and frustrate some of his plans? We have the ability to frustrate God's plans, he says.

Or he's at least asking the question. And then he describes his pilgrimage in his theology from Augustine who was in some ways taught the things that the Reformers taught, at least in seed form, to Arminius.

[14:41] And he calls what he believes Arminianism. It is not. And we'll talk about that in a minute. It's another step down the road beyond Arminianism. But listen to some of his statements from his spiritual journey.

And notice how it's based in large part on his experience. And I found that, especially in this book with Gregory Boyd. He begins with his experience.

Instead of starting with Scripture and interpreting his experience, in light of Scripture, he takes his experience and interprets the Scripture in light of that. Does it backwards. And that's something that you'll find as common if you spend any time with open theists.

He says, What had dawned on me, and what I had known experientially all along in my walk with the Lord. He's saying my experience and my theology up to this point in my life didn't match.

What I had known experientially all along in my walk with the Lord, that there is a profound mutuality in our dealings with God. What happens between us is not simply the product of a set of pre-mundane divine decrees that written on an everlasting and unchangeable scroll determine all that takes place in the world.

[15:54] I began to doubt the existence of an all-determining, fatalistic blueprint for history. And to think of God's having made us significantly free creatures able to accept or reject His purposes for us.

They talk about that blueprint worldview. That's what Gregory Boyd calls it in his book. A blueprint worldview. That God has a blueprint and all things are happening according to that blueprint. And they use it in a derogatory fashion.

But as significantly free creatures, he says, we are able to accept or reject His purposes for us. And then he says this, God too faces possibilities in the future and not only certainties.

God too moves into a future not wholly known because not yet fixed. God hasn't determined the future. He hasn't fixed it. He hasn't planned it.

And so it is not known to Him. And he says, the God of the Bible displays an openness to the future that the traditional view of omniscience simply cannot accommodate. Now, to me, if you take away the foreknowledge of God and say He doesn't know the future, then He's not omniscient anymore.

[17:07] He doesn't know all things. Now, they continue to affirm the omniscience of God and the omnipotence of God. And they have ways around that. It's too complex to even, for me to understand fully or to be able to explain.

But I don't want you to think that they deny the omniscience of God. Practically, I think they do, but they would still affirm it. That's Clark Pinnock. And again, this is a conservative Orthodox publishing house, Bethany House Publishers.

Richard Rice, another well-known proponent of open theism, says this, God not only influences the events of this world, but the events of this world influence Him too.

And then he says, instead of viewing the negative experiences of life as things that God specifically plans for us to endure, they set God up as the source of evil.

We understand that all things come from the hand of a loving God and yet still affirm that He is not the source of evil. They set God up as one who is to blame for evil.

[18:17] That's the view that they're viewing here, that God is to blame for our suffering. And they say, instead of viewing the negative experiences of life as things that God specifically plans for us to endure, for reasons usually known only to Him, this concept of providence allows us to acknowledge that some things are not good and cannot be what God has intended for us.

Some things cannot be what God has intended for us. This is a denial that all things come to us from the hand of a loving God. They make that view out to be a God who's not loving.

And then Richard Rice says, at the same time, however, it assures us that God is acutely aware of our suffering, that He shares in it to the fullest, and most important, that He will work for good in response to it, no matter how tragic it may be.

It's a little bit bold for Him to be quoting Romans 8.28, that God works all things together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose, when God doesn't know what's going to come, and He doesn't know what's going to happen, and so how is He going to work it together for our good?

They say, well, He responds to whatever comes, and then He works with what He's got to bring it together for our good. But it's a denial of everything the Scriptures teach us about God.

[19:39] John Sanders, another well-known proponent of open theism. John Sanders taught for many years at Huntington College.

You all might know that name because it's where the Mid-America Family Conference was held for quite a few years. It's just down the road, not too far from here, in Huntington, Indiana. Again, this is right in your backyard.

And he wrote a book called *The God Who Risks*. This book was published by InterVarsity Press, IVP, another conservative evangelical publishing company.

And he says, God enters into genuine give-and-take relations with humans. What God wants does not always come about. And then I've referenced the book by Gregory Boyd as *God to Blame* that takes the traditional view of the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God and makes it a derogatory thing, refers to it as the divine blueprint plan, and sets God up as this cruel tyrant almost, although they wouldn't use that word tyrant even in referring to our views.

And so that's a little something of what they believe from their own lips. God doesn't know the future because he hasn't planned it and he isn't bringing it to pass according to his plan. God is reacting to what happens.

[21:00] God still has power to intervene in the world and to act in the world, but it's reactionary by and large. Boyd even affirms that sometimes God is able to intervene and prevent evil from happening, prevent bad things from happening.

And again, it's too complex to explain or even to understand how he gets there. He doesn't know what's coming, but he's able to intervene to stop it occasionally. But when he doesn't, it's not his fault.

He couldn't have stopped it. God was unable to stop it. The supposed great comfort here in open theism, and here's where the experience comes in, how it's driven by people's experience.

The great comfort is that God doesn't control the bad events in our lives. In other words, he's not to blame. When something terrible, something tragic in your life happens, you don't have to ask the question, why God?

Because God wasn't in control of it. It was something that was beyond his control. If God could have stopped it, surely he would have. He doesn't know those things are coming, and so he reacts with us.

[22:12] He's there to be sad with us at the tragedy in our lives. He feels our pain, so to speak, rather than being the source of our pain. That's the supposed attraction in open theism.

And it paints a picture of a God who is very loving, a God who is right there with you in the midst of your trial, surprised like you are, not the source of them, mourning with you, not causing your mourning.

Now maybe at this point you're entirely skeptical. Do people really believe this? Yes. People really do.

Is it really a danger for us here? Yes. I believe that it could be. It's my understanding that several years ago, Paul Martin, who preached for us last Sunday night, thought it was dangerous enough to teach you about it several years ago.

Maybe you remember. I think it was a Sunday school class that he taught on this topic. I believe that it's important for us to come back and give our attention to it today, and Lord willing, again next week.

[23:18] And wow, I'm already behind schedule. We'll see how far we get. Some of my professors at Westminster are in a battle with these people.

They're not the ones espousing it. They're fighting open theism. They're having to give their time to write and to defend the traditional view of God because it's becoming so predominant.

Let me give you one more example of how widespread this is. Okay, it's in our library, but nobody checked that book out. Okay, these guys wrote about it. I've never heard of John Sanders and Richard Rice and Clark Pinnock.

How close to home is it really? And now, don't freak out when I say this, okay? Many of you are familiar with the name John Piper. Many of his books are on our book rack in the back.

John Piper does not believe in open theism. Okay, don't have a heart attack. We're going to talk about his denomination for a moment. John Piper is a pastor in the Baptist General Conference.

[24:20] This is a fairly conservative denomination. It's not one of the mainline liberal churches. It's a conservative denomination that proclaims the truth of God's Word.

The Baptist General Conference. He's the pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church and it's in Minneapolis, Minnesota. There are some 800 plus churches in the BGC.

Another member of the BGC is this man, Gregory Boyd, who wrote this book. He's the pastor of Woodland Hills Church.

This is in St. Paul, Minnesota. And if you know anything about Minnesota, Minneapolis, St. Paul, it's sort of like Dallas, Fort Worth, South Bend, Mishawaka, on a smaller scale, two cities are right next door to each other.

And so, in Minneapolis, you have Bethlehem Baptist with John Piper and in St. Paul, you have Woodland Hills with Gregory Boyd. Boyd was also a professor at the BGC's seminary, Bethel Seminary, which is also located in St. Paul.

[25:25] He taught there for some 16 years. And as you know, Boyd has begun writing in the past years in favor of open theism and has become a leading proponent of open theism.

He is a pastor in this Baptist General Conference. Back in 1998, when some of this was just starting to break out, it's been on the scene for about nine or ten years now.

Well, it's actually been around since the 16th century. We'll talk about that in a minute. But when it was just starting to become popular, Boyd was starting to write in favor of it. And others were very concerned that a member of their conference was teaching in their seminary, was pastoring one of their churches and teaching this view of God.

And so Piper and some others drafted a resolution to be adopted at one of their general conferences to add to their statement of faith.

Their statement of faith is the BGC affirmation of faith. Sort of like our confession, but it's briefer. It's a more condensed statement of faith. And they wanted to add this sentence in the section about God the Father.

[26:30] We believe that He foreknows infallibly all that shall come to pass. They had an amendment. We want to add this to our affirmation of faith because people were teaching that God didn't know the future.

And so in 1999 at their annual conference in June, there was a great debate. They were concerned that Boyd's departure wasn't just again from Calvinism to Arminianism.

It was from orthodoxy to heresy. And they didn't want their conference to go down that road. And so there was a debate. Boyd said, if you pass the amendment, it's a vote to disfellowship me.

I'm going to resign if you pass the amendment. And the amendment failed by a vote of 270 to 251.

The Baptist General Conference, a conservative Baptist denomination, voted not to affirm the foreknowledge of God in their statement of faith.

some people believe it came down to a vote not over theology but a friendship and loyalty to Boyd.

Regardless, they voted not to affirm the foreknowledge of God as a conference.

[27:40] Since then, Boyd no longer teaches at their seminary but he is still a pastor of one of their churches. religious. And so, it's something that we must pay attention to, something we must be prepared to answer and respond to, something where we must be prepared to defend the traditional teaching that God does indeed know the future.

And it's interesting to note, especially for any of you historians out there, that there's nothing new under the sun. Does anybody know, have I said it already? Does anybody know the name of the group of people that held to this very era back in the 16th and 17th century?

If you read Calvin for any length of time you can hardly dodge it. He's always talking about the the Socinians.

Oh, the rumbles of recognition or I've never heard of the Socinians before. This is not Arminianism. This is Socinianism.

The Socinians in the 16th and 17th century recognized that the Calvinists were more consistent than the Arminians. They believed not only that God knew the future but that he also ordained it.

[29:00] He also willed it and was bringing it to pass. The Arminians believed that God knew it but he wasn't totally in control of it. He knew what your choice would be but he had no control over it.

That's pretty inconsistent. If God knows it he's in control of it. So the Socinians instead of coming over and being consistent with the Calvinists denied both. They said God has not ordained the future and he doesn't know it.

He doesn't know what is going to come to pass. God knows only possibilities not certainties. And so there's nothing new under the sun.

This is exactly what open theists are saying today. It's not consistent to say that God knows it but he's not in control of it. So they deny both. Both go out the window. And it is not.

Don't let them tell you again he calls his journey from Augustine to Arminius. No it's just from Augustine to Socinus who was the one who first expounded these views.

[29:59] And Socinianism has been denounced rightly as a heresy in the history of the church. So why is it that we affirm the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God?

We want to take a look at the biblical case for the foreknowledge of God. Are there any questions to this point? Any comments? I hope this is troubling to you at least on some level. If you've never heard of it before that's probably good.

Roger. What would you do with the scripture you think in Acts where it was said of Paul to make the remark, I'm not showing him how much he has suffered.

I mean, if God didn't have the cause of suffering, God didn't have knowledge of his church. I can't fully answer that because I haven't fully read what open theists say.

And again, I don't want to put words in their mouth, but I believe that there are a lot of texts that they can't account for. Boyd gives the last chapter of his book to answering some of the most common texts that we would hold to.

[31:07] He doesn't address that one, at least when I skimmed through that chapter, I didn't see that text there. One of the things Boyd says is we must take our view of God only from the person of Christ.

It is in Christ that God is most clearly and fully revealed to us. And Christ, when he walked on the earth, was not the cause of suffering, but alleviated suffering.

He brought mercy to those who are in need. He healed the sick. He fed the hungry. He healed the diseased, the crippled. And so anything else that the scriptures say about God, Boyd says, has to be interpreted in the light of what we know about God in Christ.

And so if it doesn't fit what he sees in Christ, then I think it tends to go out the window or it can be interpreted in another way. But they find a way to interpret their way around those things.

Ed? in that aspect of Christ, Christ says only the Father knows these things when the time for his return will come.

[32:22] In other words, Christ has telling the people he had limited dollars. That's what he's right into. That's what he's right into. Yeah, that's helpful. And I'm sorry I can't answer your question more fully.

You can read up on it and see what they would say yourself. And I need to do some more reading, admittedly. I'm not an expert by any stretch on open theism. So I don't know.

Dave? So it sounds like maybe the nine holes block of scripture, whether it's all the prophecies, and where God is through the prophets telling about the birth of Christ, 700 years before, even Christ himself telling how he is going to suffer.

You've touched on two of the next two things I'm going to say here on our case for the foreknowledge of God. They don't deny those things. But there's some way of explaining them.

And again, I can't do it. Maybe I need to go back and dig in. I'm not sure if he's got a chapter on prophecy or not. Anyway, I'm confusing different things that I've read now.

[33:43] But you're right. You're absolutely right. Your questions are showing that you're thinking quite clearly that they are throwing out whole chunks of scripture. So it seems to me.

Roger. It sounds like the whole approach goes back to higher criticism where, you know, let's read the cover Christ. Let's go back to historical Jesus and see what Jesus is like and just know what our eyes see that we can interpret.

It just sounds like a man sensitive society. Just because somebody doesn't understand something in scripture doesn't mean you can just do away with it.

Right. Right. Right. And I think, I don't know that I've read higher critics eventually get there. They eventually deny almost everything we believe about God.

I haven't seen those two things directly tied together in the things that I've read, but certainly they could go hand in hand. And I think you've touched on something very important there. It is a very man centered view.

[34 : 45] It's experience driven. And that's again, that's what drives a lot of what they believe that man centeredness.

I had a thought and I lost it. Anyway, any other questions before we go on here? Roger. The other Roger. Roger. Roger. Roger. That's exactly right.

That's one of the places you see it. And these people, people that say that sort of thing, oh, that God was not in control, couldn't have been in control. Again, there's always this desire in people's minds to resolve the tension, to resolve tension between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, to resolve the tension that says, if God is all powerful, then why didn't he stop the tsunami?

And if God is loving, why didn't he stop the tsunami? So if God is both loving and all powerful, that can't be, one of them has to go, either God isn't a loving God or God isn't in control.

Or God didn't know it was coming, here's how they resolved the tension, they say God didn't know it was coming, and so he didn't stop it, because he couldn't have anticipated it.

[36 : 24] But there's always a desire to resolve a tension that scripture doesn't always resolve for us. And so you do see that view, and whenever a natural disaster happens. Dale.

That's part of the great comfort, that God is not the source of your suffering, and so he's able to mourn with you in the midst of it.

What's that? He's still able to work together for good, everything that comes into your life.

He's just not the source of everything that comes into your life. And so he is able to... I know, it sounds ridiculous. I'm trying, I'm not... Let me defend open theism for a minute.

I just want to be fair in the presentation of it. They do say he still does work for our good. One of the things I forgot to read from this is his conclusion at the end of the introduction, and I think he's got no right...

[37 : 44] This is Clark Pinnock now. He says, but there is true comfort in the gospel and in the promise of our Lord to preserve his church through time and give to her the spirit of truth to guide her in the midst of her struggle.

Somebody tell me what's wrong with that conclusion, knowing what they believe. There's true comfort in the gospel and in the promise of our Lord to preserve his church through time. What's wrong with that from their point of view?

Mark? His promises are about as good as ours are if he doesn't know and is in control of what's going to come to pass.

There's really no comfort there. But they find comfort somehow. There's no comfort in a God that doesn't know what's going to come to pass. So his promises aren't sure.

Jason. Right. So he brings all the power there as much as he can, but he can't force people who do things that don't want to do that.

[39 : 07] Right. So it's more of a warfare thing to put it together. Right. And there's elements of truth in that. There is a spiritual battle going on.

And Boyd espouses that. There's a whole chapter on his warfare theology here. And that's a helpful perspective. Dave. Dave. Dave. Right.

Right. Absolutely. And therefore there is no comfort. There's no sure future for us. You all are very insightful.

Maybe we don't need the rest of the lesson making the case because you've been well taught. You know the case for God's foreknowledge for his sovereignty over all things. We'll have to save it for next time.

We're going to look at the scriptural basis for the foreknowledge of God. We'll look at very briefly one aspect of the case for open theism, those passages where it said that God regretted, repented, was sorry, relented.

[40 : 30] We'll look at some of those passages and seek to explain some of them and our response to them. And this might be, oh boy, this might be three weeks.

We'll see. We'll see how long it takes and how much of a discussing folks you are, how much interest there is and how many comments you have.

And I appreciate very much your feedback today. It shows me that you are well taught and that you're thinking clearly when I'm presenting this stuff and not just, oh, that makes sense.

I see your wheels turning and going, that doesn't make sense and that's good because it really doesn't. It shouldn't make sense to us. Well, may God make us a people that are aware of what's

going on in the world, in the church, around us, ready to stand up and defend the truth that we hold dear.

And you've shown to me today that you're ready to do that in large part with regard to open theism. Now, it's easy to do that with me. I'm sympathetic with you.

[41 : 33] I'm more than sympathetic. I absolutely agree with you. And so, you need not convince me, but you need to be prepared for others that don't agree with you.

They'll be a little harder to win over. And so, may God make us a people that are ready to defend the truth of his word. And Lord willing, we'll get to that clear truth next week in examining the biblical basis for these things.