

Open Theism (part 2)

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Preacher: Aaron Hoak

[0:00] You'll remember that last week we began to look at the topic of open theism, or the openness of God, or free will theism. A view of theology that believes that God doesn't know the future.

He doesn't know what's going to happen because it's according to man's choice. Things in the future, there are going to be choices that men have to make. And if man is truly free, no one can know what that choice will be.

If man is truly free, not even God knows what the choices men will make will be. And so the future is up in the air. It's indeterminate because God doesn't know it, and He's not bringing it to pass according to His good and perfect plan.

Understand, this is what open theists believe. It's not what I'm teaching you. Just trying to fairly accurately represent what they believed. And we spent all of last week seeking to do that. And I was glad to see some of your blood boiling a little bit. And some good questions were asked. And some good observations were made. And that's good. It shows your thinking.

[1:04] It shows that this idea of God not knowing the future, God being open to the future, is a dangerous idea. There's no comfort in it, as they would suppose, that God is right there with you, suffering with you, surprised as you are when difficulty comes into your life.

And so He's able to sympathize better with you. There's no real comfort there. And hopefully we'll see that as we go today. We saw that it's very near to us.

It's not something that's just being kicked around in seminaries and in other churches. I had a book with me last week and I neglected to bring it today. Is God to Blame?

Written by Gregory Boyd that I checked out of the Bremen Public Library. This stuff is right here at home. And it's infiltrating evangelical churches in many places.

Well, today we want to take a few moments to look at the scriptural basis for the foreknowledge of God. We believe that God does know the future. We want to look at why this morning.

[2:06] I don't think I have to convince you all of that. But we want to demonstrate it and make it plain from the scriptures that God does indeed know the future. And then we'll look at some of the texts that open theists use to support their position and attempt to explain some of those texts.

And give the reason why we think their interpretation is correct. And then we'll draw some observations towards the end. I hope to finish this up today.

We'll see how far we get. Turn in your Bibles, if you would, to Isaiah chapter 42. The first thing we want to see in making the case that God does infallibly know what will come to pass is that that's part of who He is.

By definition, God is God and knows all things. It's part of His divinity. When God defines Himself, He defines Himself in terms of someone who does know the future. It's who He is.

And to deny that God knows the future is to deny something very fundamental and basic to who God is. It's to deny His divinity, in effect. And so notice Isaiah chapter 42, verses 8 and 9.

[3:22] I am the Lord. That is my name. I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. See, the former things have taken place and new things I declare.

Before they spring into being, I announce them to you. See, God's glory is at stake here. I'm God and there is no other. I will not give my glory to another. And one of the things that defines His glory, His divinity, who He is, is that before things spring into being, I announce them to you.

God knows them beforehand. Because He has planned them. And He is bringing them to pass.

Look over at Isaiah chapter 46. Again, this is part of the definition of who God is.

That He knows things before they come to pass. Isaiah 46, verses 8 through 11. Remember this. Fix it in mind.

Take it to heart, you rebels. Remember the former things, those of long ago. I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like Me. I make known the end from the beginning.

[4:30] From ancient times, what is still to come? You hear what He says? I make known from ancient times, what is still to come? Before it happens. And then He goes on. I say, my purpose will stand.

And I will do all that I please. From the east, I summon a bird of prey. From a far off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about. What I have planned, that will I do.

God has planned it. He knows it before it comes to pass. And He is bringing it to pass according to His good and perfect will. That is a sovereign, all-knowing, foreknowing God.

That's part of who He is. To take away His foreknowledge is to take away part of His very divinity. Look over to the Gospel of John now. In chapter 13.

Christ claimed to know the future. To know what was going to come to pass before it happened. And it was one of His claims to divinity.

[5:31] One of His claims to being the very Son of God. To being God Himself. Was that He knew what was going to happen. And He says, my foreknowledge of the future is an evidence that when you see these things come to pass, you'll know that I'm God.

Listen to what He says. He's just foretold. We're going to look at verse 19. But Jesus has just predicted His betrayal. We'll go ahead and read verse 18. I'm not referring to all of you.

I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill the Scripture. He who shares My bread has lifted up his heel against Me. He's anticipating His betrayal. And He's going to say more about it as He goes. But notice what He says in verse 19. I am telling you now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe that I am He.

Literally, you will believe that I am. That's the name of Yahweh, the God of the Old Testament. He revealed Himself as the I am to Moses in the burning bush. And Jesus says, the way you will know that I am, the way you will know that I am God, is that what I have said will come to pass.

[6:39] I'm telling you now, before it happens, so that when it does happen, you will believe that I am He. Jesus' claim to being God is that He knew the future before it came to pass.

And then turn over to Acts chapter 2. some other texts that tell us that God does indeed know the future and what will come to pass.

And it is not in contradiction to the free choices that men make. Remember, open theists, free will theists, say the traditional view of God is incompatible with man's free will.

If man is truly free to make choices, then not even God can know what those choices will be.

Otherwise, man isn't truly free. Well, God teaches, the Bible teaches, that man is free to make choices, and yet God still knows what those choices will be.

It's not something I can fully explain to you, but Peter is okay with attention on the day of Pentecost. He's preaching, and so we should be okay with attention too, that God knows the future, and we're free to make choices.

[7:47] Listen to what Peter says. Acts 2.22 Men of Israel, listen to this. Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs, which God did among you through Him as you yourselves know.

This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose, and foreknowledge. God's what? Foreknowledge. Huh. Okay.

Anyway, this man was handed over to you by God's set purpose, and foreknowledge, and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.

He was handed over by God's foreknowledge, but you put him to death. God knew what would happen. He planned it, and yet the people that carried it out are completely responsible, because it was their choice to do it.

Man's choice, and God's sovereignty and foreknowledge, are held there in tension. And Peter doesn't try to resolve it for us. He doesn't say, well, if it was really a free choice, God must not have known it, so I'm not going to talk about God's foreknowledge.

[8:49] And if God knew it, then it wasn't really a free choice, so I'm not going to hold men responsible for it. No, he holds both there. God knew it, and man is responsible for it.

But you see that he talks specifically about the foreknowledge of God, because there is such a thing. It can't be denied. Turn over to Romans chapter 8. The security of our very salvation rests in the foreknowledge of God.

And that's what we see in Romans chapter 8. We'll notice verses 28 through 30. And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.

For those God foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, so that He might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those He predestined, He also called.

Those He called, He also justified. Those He justified, He also glorified. What ends in our glorification, our secure position and glory in heaven, begins with God's foreknowledge.

[10:00] And so when you cut off God's foreknowledge, then the rest of it that follows after it, is left in doubt. Your salvation is left up to your choice. And we know that left to ourselves, we will only choose things in accordance with our sinful nature.

And so we know that we will never choose salvation. And so it's a good thing that God knew us beforehand. That He chose us beforehand. Because if He had not, then our salvation is in doubt. It's in our hands. And I don't want my salvation in my hands. Because left to myself, I know what I'll choose. I'll choose sin. I'll choose the world. That's all I can choose in and of myself.

So I'm glad that God chose me beforehand. That He foreknew me. He didn't look and know that I would choose the right thing. He looked and He knew me, and He predestined me to follow Christ. And so if you take away God's foreknowledge, you take away really the certainty of your salvation. Because you're saying God doesn't know. He doesn't know who's going to be saved. And it's up to your choice whether you'll be saved or not.

[11:04] Turn over to Ephesians chapter 1. You get the idea when you read open theists, which I don't recommend. But if you ever do, you get the idea that they're sort of embarrassed about this view of God.

It sort of makes them uncomfortable. That God knows the future. Not their own view. Our view of God is a bit embarrassing to them. That this view of a God that knows the future and their derogatory term, the divine blueprint, that God is bringing all things to pass, that makes them uncomfortable.

But notice how comfortable Paul is with it. It's not a source of embarrassment for him. It's a source of praise. And this ought to cause us to praise God today. That God does know the future.

He does predestine it. Notice Ephesians chapter 1 beginning in verse 3. Praise! Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ in accordance with His pleasure and will to the praise of His glorious grace which He has freely given us and the one He loves.

[12:18] Do you see how Paul delights in God's foreknowledge, in His predestination? He doesn't make specific reference to God's foreknowledge here, but we see that it goes hand in hand with His predestination.

And it's a source of delight. It's a source of praise. It's part of the glory of God that He knows the future. Not something to be embarrassed about. Not something to try to do away with because it doesn't fit our view of who God is.

And then we could take the time to do this, but we won't so that we can try to get through everything today. The multiple fulfilled prophecies in Scripture. God knew what would come to pass and He told His prophets and the prophets proclaimed it.

It's recorded for us in the pages of the prophets. And time and again, what we see is those prophecies coming true. The people of Israel were carried off into captivity by the Assyrians.

The people of Judah were hauled off into captivity by the Babylonians as had been prophesied, as had been foretold. Babylon did crumble as had been prophesied because God knew the future and still knows the future.

[13:23] The Son of God came into the world as was prophesied. We saw the glorious prophecy that a child will be born, wonderful counselor, mighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

And that happened in the person of Jesus Christ. Again and again, prophecy is fulfilled telling us that God does indeed, in spite of or in accordance with the choices that men make, God does know the future and does bring it to pass.

And so that is the testimony of Scripture. When you read through Scripture, that is the unmistakable conclusion you have to draw. And so when you pick up a book of theology, it will affirm that God does indeed know the future because that is the clear teaching of the Scriptures.

Now, keep all of that in mind as we come to consider just a small part of the case for open theism. Turn over to 1 Samuel chapter 15. Sorry to be flipping you to so many passages today.

I want you to see these things with your own eyes though. And to read them with me. Or to follow with me as I read them so that there is no mistaking what the Scriptures teach.

[14 : 35] You remember, we ran across this back when we were studying the book of Jonah. And God relented. He repented concerning the disaster he had proclaimed on the people of Nineveh.

Forty days and Nineveh will be destroyed. And then the people of Nineveh repent. Well, apparently God didn't see that coming and so he had to relent concerning the disaster that he had promised. He had to change his mind, change his course of action, and not bring about the disaster that he proclaimed. That's how an open theist would interpret Jonah chapter 3 and verse 10 where it said that God relented.

I think the NIV translates it God had mercy perhaps in Jonah chapter 3. But it's the word relent, repent, regret, grieve, grieved the Lord that he had proclaimed this disaster on Nineveh.

Something similar here in 1 Samuel chapter 15. Saul is foolish. He disobeys his God. And so this is the conclusion of it.

[15 : 38] 1 Samuel chapter 15. Notice verses 10 and 11. Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel. I am grieved.

That's our word. The word that's used of God in Jonah. I am sorry. I regret. I relent. I am grieved that I have made Saul king because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.

Samuel was troubled and cried out to the Lord all that night. And look at verse 35 as well at the end of the chapter. Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again though Saul mourned for him.

And the Lord was grieved. The Lord regretted. The Lord repented. The Lord changed his mind. It could even be translated that he had made Saul king over Israel.

I'll turn back to 1 Samuel 13. Gregory Boyd in his book The God of the Possible says that the plain meaning of these Scriptures is that God changed his mind.

[16 : 41] God regretted what he had did. The plain meaning because it says that. And that's the word that's used. Let's be fair. The word there can be translated grieved. It grieved God. God regretted having made Saul king over Israel.

And it starts back in 1 Samuel 13. Notice verses 13 and 14. God was going to bless Saul but he changes his course of action.

1 Samuel 13 verses 13 and 14. You have acted foolishly Samuel said. You have not kept the command the Lord your God gave you. If you had. If you had obeyed Saul.

This was in your hand Saul. If you had. He would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now. Because of what you did Saul. But now your kingdom will not endure.

The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him leader over his people because you have not kept the Lord's command. You see how Saul alters the plans of God.

[17 : 38] That's how an open theist would read it. If you had just obeyed Saul. Then God would have blessed you and established your kingdom. And we wouldn't have the Davidic line of kings. We would have the Saul line of kings.

But you did disobey. And so because of that. Now. David is going. Or another man. Who we know is David. Is going to be set on the throne. Gregory Boyd says that if you read the plain meaning of the words.

Then clearly God cannot know the future because he didn't know what Saul would do. God had a plan A. Saul thwarted that plan and so God had to go with plan B. Because he wasn't sure which was going to happen.

He says you can't. We're going to talk about this more in a moment. He says you can't claim that this is going to use big word today. An anthropomorphism. It's a way of talking about God in terms of man.

And the scripture is full of them. When the scriptures refer to the hand of God. Does God actually have a hand? No. The simple cataclysm question. God is a spirit and has not a body like men.

[18:48] And so the scriptures talk about the hand of God. The eyes of the Lord being in every place. God doesn't have eyes. He doesn't have a hand. He doesn't have a strong right arm.

That's a way of speaking so that we can understand something about who God is. And that's what we believe is going on in these passages where it talks about God regretting. God changing his mind.

God talking in a way that we can understand him. Boyd says you can't do that here. The only places that happens are the ridiculous, the absurd, like the hand of God. Obviously God doesn't have a hand because he doesn't have a body.

And maybe in poetry. But it doesn't happen he says in narrative. And so you have to take the plain meaning of the text. And any other view he says is coming to it with a theological bias.

You all assume that God knows the future and so when you read this you interpret this passage in light of God knowing the future. Okay, accuse me of that all day long. That's exactly right.

[19:46] I have presuppositions that are based on the word of God. And we just saw what those presuppositions are. We just read them. We just made the case very briefly albeit but we made the case for God's foreknowledge.

We saw those passages that they are unmistakable. That God does indeed know the future. And so that is my presupposition. I am coming with that view.

I am assuming that when I come to read 1 Samuel 13 and 1 Samuel 15. Exactly. We could look at other passages. I want you to turn over though to Jeremiah chapter 18. In Genesis chapter 6 with regard to the flood don't turn to Genesis turn to the passage in Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 18. But in Genesis chapter 6 the Lord looks down from the heavens and He sees that every thought of man all the time is wicked. That God is wicked and God regretted that He made man on the earth.

God relented. He repented of having made man on the earth. God changed His mind about having made man on the earth. And so because of man's sin God sends the flood.

[21:03] God is reacting to something that He didn't expect they say in Genesis chapter 6. That is another example they use. They use the one in Jonah. But notice what God says. And here in Jeremiah chapter 18 God is explaining Himself in terms that we can understand.

In terms again in some ways this is language that's accommodating to us. But Jeremiah chapter 18 verses 7 and 8 we'll read actually through verse 10.

If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted torn down and destroyed and if that nation I warned repents of its evil then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. That's exactly what happened with Nineveh. God had promised disaster they repented and God relented. Exactly what He says He will do. But continue on and if at another time verse 9 I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be built up and planted and it does evil in my sight and does not obey me then I will reconsider the good I intended to do for it.

God says and open theists use this passage they take this and they say see God doesn't know the future He is waiting to see how the nation will respond what they will do.

[22:18] We take this passage and we say God is describing for us how He interacts with the nations all of this is part of God's plan for Him to warn a nation and when they repent He will relent concerning the disaster or to promise blessing to a nation and if they disobey then to bring punishment on the nation instead.

This is how God interacts with us and it's described in a way that we can understand. Perhaps you do that with your children you threaten them or promise blessing but if their behavior changes then so does your response to them.

God is describing things in a way that we can understand. He's not saying that He doesn't know the future. Whenever you come to the Scriptures one of the fundamental rules of interpreting Scripture is interpret the obscure and light of the clear.

If there's something that's difficult to understand take it to the passages that are crystal clear that make statements that are very clear and interpret it in that light and we've seen that God knows the future that He brings it to pass according to His plan.

We've also seen that God gives freedom to men to make choices and they're real choices and those two things I can't fully explain to you how they work together but the Scripture teaches both of them and so I'm not going to throw either one out the window.

[23:38] The open theists say we've got to resolve the tension and so we're going to throw the foreknowledge of God out the window in the face of repeated affirmations of it in Scripture and that is something that you cannot do.

I'd like you to turn back now to 1 Samuel chapter 15. Thank you for your patience. That may be the last place. I think that's the last place I'm going to have you turn today. Back to 1 Samuel chapter 15.

We believe that in these passages where God describes Himself or He inspires the Samuel to speak of Him this way, God regretting, God being grieved that He made Saul to be king, God being grieved that He made man on the earth, God changing His mind about the punishment coming on Nineveh and so on, that God is describing Himself in human terms.

He's using anthropomorphisms as our big word to describe God in terms of human. And they are not restricted, as Boyd says, to the ridiculous, the hand of God.

They're not restricted to poetry. They take place in narrative too. If you read Genesis chapter 11, it's the story of the Tower of Babel and it talks about God coming down from Heaven to see what the sons of men were doing.

[25:03] Does God need to come down from Heaven to be able to see what's going on? God is everywhere present. And so God can't really come down from Heaven because He's already here and in Heaven.

But that's language describing things in terms that we can understand. God comes down from Heaven. He sees what's going on. And that, Genesis chapter 11, is not figurative language. It's not poetry. It's plain narrative. It's the plain meaning of the text. So anthropomorphisms do occur in narrative like that. You can't say that.

You can't write off 1 Samuel 15 as not being able to be described in terms like this. But I want you to notice the plain meaning of Scripture in 1 Samuel 15 and verse 29.

Same chapter where it said God is grieved that He made Saul king. Notice what is said in 1 Samuel 15 will begin in verse 27.

[26:02] As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe and it tore. Samuel said to him, The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbors, to one better than you.

He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change his mind. Same word that God was grieved. God changed His mind that He made sulking over a girl.

Same word. He who is the glory of Israel does not lie or change His mind for He is not a man that He should change His mind. Again, the very nature of who God is is that He doesn't change.

That He doesn't reverse course. That is the nature of who God is. And I'm not sure what Boyd does when he reads this verse because the plain meaning of it, as he's arguing for elsewhere, is that God doesn't change His mind.

It's a statement about who God is. He doesn't change His mind. He's not like us. And so when it says that God was grieved that He made Samuel, our translations try to soften it for us.

[27:09] You notice they say God changed His mind here and it says God grieved here. Both of those are legitimate translations but it removes the conflict for us. It removes some of the tension for us.

But the tension is there. But you read that God can't change His mind and then you read that God did change His mind, that He was grieved. And so we take that principle of interpreting the obscure and the light of the clear.

We understand that God is revealing Himself to us in terms that are more accessible to us. God, theologians say, and they're right, God reveals Himself to us not as He is in Himself.

A Latin term is in se. Not as He is in Himself but as He is towards us. Ergonomos are the Latin words for it. It's the language of accommodation. Calvin speaks of God using baby talk.

Really, all of Scripture being the language of accommodation so that we can begin to understand something of this infinite God. God's ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. And so we can't fully comprehend who God is.

[28:12] There are Puritans that used to say they would gladly give up everything that they know about God to know everything that they don't know about Him. Saying, that's how limited our knowledge of God is.

There's so much that we don't know and understand about God. They gladly give up everything that they do understand to just know the far greater amount that they don't know about God. And so when the Scriptures teach us that God knows the future, that He does not change, and teach it plainly and clearly, and they define God in those terms that He is one who does know what will come to pass.

We must understand passages like these in 1 Samuel 15 where God is grieved, where it appears that God changes His course of action because of what man does, as the way that God has revealed Himself to us, the way that God does interact with man.

Men really do have choices to make, and their choices, apart from the grace of God, will always be for evil. Now that's where we begin to differ with our friends, our enemies, to advocate free will theism, open theism.

They believe that man can choose good. They have a view of the free will of man that is not compatible with the Scriptures. And so, we are to interpret the clear, or the obscure, and the light of the clear, interpreting Scripture with Scripture.

[29 : 36] Now I know that I've just dumped a whole truckload on you, and it's a very brief summary of what theologians have affirmed for years, what the Scriptures have taught since they were written.

And sometimes there are things that we can't fully resolve in our minds, and that's what it comes down to. They want to resolve that tension, and the Scriptures don't try to resolve it. We saw that in Acts chapter 2, verse 22 and 23.

This is a dangerous thing to say. Do you all have any questions about anthropomorphism? I'm not telling you I'll be able to answer them all perfectly, about how God reveals Himself to us, about our interpretation of these passages versus the interpretation of the open theists.

Rats. Lou, I'm not saying that there were questions at all was my disappointment. Lou. Lou. Yes, sir.

We're going to get there in a second.

[30 : 50] That's exactly right. That's exactly right. Ed. Ed. Go ahead.

They don't affirm that God doesn't know anything.

They still affirm the omniscience of God. We're going to talk about that in a minute. Well, maybe not as well. They don't paint themselves quite into that much of a corner. Some things somehow are knowable to God, but the choices of men are not.

What Saul was going to do, God could not have known because Saul is a free human being, free to make a choice. And since only he can make that choice, nobody can know what that choice will be. They don't say that God knows nothing of the future. They affirm God's foreknowledge of some aspects of the future, but it seems more to be limited to the choices that men are going to make, the choices that free creatures are going to make.

[32 : 18] Those can't be known because they're free creatures, and if they are known, then they aren't really free. So they don't totally paint themselves into that corner, is my understanding of it.

And again, my reading is limited, and I don't want to misrepresent them, but does that answer your question, sort of? Okay, Chuck? I don't know if you do that more like how many things are that space, how many things are that space, and what do you have?

Yeah, and those aren't the choices of men, are they? It, yes. No, well, I don't know.

I understand your question, but I don't know enough about what they believe to be able to answer it fairly. Anybody want to, anybody that has, is more well-read on it?

Does God know that disasters are coming, earthquakes, and tsunamis, and hurricanes, and had he known they were coming, could he have stopped them?

[33 : 25] I'm guessing the answer is, this is sort of a stab, the answer is no, because even the entrance of sin into the world, and the fact that the world is a fallen world that has hurricanes, and earthquakes, and tsunamis, is a result of man's sin, which is man's choice.

Something that man chose, and therefore something that God couldn't have fully anticipated. That's a stab. But again, I want to be careful, because I don't want to misrepresent what they say.

Jason. It's fine. That's possible.

Yeah. A lot of their comfort, though, comes from saying that God is not the source of those things, at least. That He is not the source of the cause of them. And so God is there to suffer with you, to be surprised with you, and so on.

So I know, you're finding all sorts of difficulties, which is good. Dave, did you have your hand? good. You alluded to this, you know, another important lesson, or recognizing that He doesn't have an inducted and how so much of our long theology comes from Christians as they do here, and they're going to be deducting from that.

[35:08] He might not have a future. Christian never said that, but he might do it. So there's deducting that, and the deducting it again, what deducted is just to help that.

And you never put your deducted man's deducted religion over and about Christians. So it's wrong that I don't say that. Right, that's good, and that's something that we're going to talk about further. Not just on passages from Scripture, they base much of it on their experience. They deduce from their experience what they think the Scriptures should teach instead of getting it from the Scriptures. Roger. Roger. Roger. Roger. Right. That's all we know.

Right. Right. Yeah, that's helpful. His ways are way beyond ours because he's outside that dimension. I've seen Roger, the other Roger.

[36:44] I haven't read enough on their views of prophecy to be able to even stab at it.

So I'm going to leave that one alone. But it's a good, it's a good, it's a fair question. It's one of the evidences of God, that God does know the future is prophecy. I've read just the tiniest bit on their views of prophecy and I don't, I can't answer that fairly.

Anyone else? Okay. We've got just a few minutes, which is not enough time. Perhaps next week we'll come back to really take a look at some of the implications of this.

Why is it that important to us and really flesh some of those things out? But notice that one of their main problems is that their theology, their doctrine of God, is based on their anthropology, their doctrine of man.

You get that? What they believe about God is based on what they believe to be true about man.

And what they believe about man doesn't appear to come from the scriptures, but rather more from their own experience.

[38:01] Now they would say that's not fair. They say they do get their view of man from the scriptures, but it seems clear that it's coming more from their own experience. And it's a fundamental error to interpret scripture in light of your experience.

It's like you're saying, here's my experience. This is what has happened to me. So I'm going to take the scriptures and I'm going to make them fit into the mold of my experience. And that is the wrong way to do theology.

You take the scriptures and you take your experience and you bring that to the scriptures. And you make your experience make sense out of the scriptures, not the other way around.

So they're creating their theology, their doctrine of God, based on their anthropology, what they think about man. Clark Pinnock, who we quoted from last week, says this.

He said, What had dawned on me was what I had known experientially all along in my walk with the Lord. Based on my experience, I knew this. Was that there is a profound mutuality in our dealings with God.

[39:00] I found I could not shake off the intuition that such a total omniscience would necessarily mean that everything we will ever choose in the future will have been already spelled out in the divine knowledge register.

And consequently, the belief that we have truly significant choices to make would seem to be mistaken. My view that man is free and makes significant choices contradicts what the Bible says about God's foreknowledge.

And so, what I've always thought about God's foreknowledge had to go based on my intuition. Based on my experience that those things don't fit together. In the book that I brought from the Bremen Library, Is God to Blame?

And Gregory Boyd says, he introduces the book. The book begins with a heart-wrenching story about a mother who lost a baby in childbirth. And how she was counseled by someone who holds our views of God's foreknowledge.

Now, the counselor misused them. And harshly applied them. And applied them in ways that we wouldn't have, I trust. And so, he sort of sets up a straw man there to begin with that he beats down.

[40:08] And we talked about that last week. But this is what he says. He says, this is a book about the mystery of why tragic things happen the way they do. So, it seems fitting to introduce the book with one of the toughest why questions a person can ever face.

Why did a woman's precious baby die in childbirth? He starts with this woman's experience instead of starting with the Scriptures. And then draws all the questions from that point.

And one other quote to demonstrate this. And this is true of almost everything I've read from their point of view. It starts with their view of man's free will.

Richard Rice, in the book that Clark Pinnock edited, said, It is evident that attempts to show that the compatibility of genuine human freedom with absolute divine foreknowledge have serious problems.

Yeah, because Scripture doesn't resolve that tension for us. And their view of man's free will is misguided as well. So, they've got a couple of problems there. And so, you can't assume things that the Scriptures don't teach.

[41:13] And so, they're trying to resolve that tension. And that's their mistake. They're starting with man's experience and an incorrect view of man's free will. And they bring it to the Scriptures and try to make it fit.

And the two can't fit. And so, they begin to cut portions out of their Bible, apparently, or interpret their way around them. And so, their problem, their fundamental problem is they think too highly of man and too little of God.