

Adult Class
December 21, 2013

- A. What is “doctrine?”
- B. What is “Church of Christ” doctrine?
 - a. Have you heard, “What does the Church of Christ teach about XYZ?”
- C. 4th Grade Bible Class
 - a. Teacher: “What is furry, has a long tail, and lives up in the church steeple?”
 - b. Eddie: “Well, it sounds like a squirrel, but I’m going to say ‘JESUS!’”
- D. What we take with us TO scripture does not necessarily DETERMINE, but it does SHAPE, what we take FROM scripture.
 - a. John 9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”
 - b. John 9:3 “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him...”
- E. Have you ever felt the need to make excuses for God?

From: Mark Morrow [mailto:markandglenda@swbell.net]
Sent: Sunday, November 29, 2009 6:41 AM
To: family@leanderchurch.com
Subject: FAM- God's Will

Dear Family,

I wrote the note below the day after Chad's funeral. Meant to send it to you earlier, but every day last week I sat in the hospital with my mother all day and just did not have the opportunity to "finalize" it to where I could share it with you. It represents something I've been studying for the last few years, but which finally came to a head while I was at Chad's service.

Chad, you're still making a difference!

My prayer is that this is God's way of providing some small measure of comfort to those who mourn.

If you'll forgive me, let me share one more thought with you before you read my note. While I was at the hospital last week I was asked to witness a last will and testament for a dying man. He was so weak he could hardly hold the pen to sign his name. His battle with cancer was coming to an end. His mom was gracious in her thanks to us who were helping make sure his dying wishes would be honored. She said, between tears, "I can't bear the thought of his 7-year-old twins growing up without a father, but I know all this is God's will." I wanted to hug her and explain to her that she need not ascribe the death of her son to "God's will" – but I had no relationship with her to enable that sort of conversation. But I do have that relationship with each of you. And I resolved to share this with you as soon as I could. I do love you all.

In His service,

Mark

21 November 2009

I went to a warrior's funeral yesterday. The battles he won were many. Every time life knocked him down he got up again. Nay, rather I should say, every time life knocked him down he was willing for God to raise him again. That took tremendous faith. More faith than many of us have. But he was a warrior, and that is what warriors do. They allow God to change their lives, and then they allow God to use them to change others' lives. And many are the lives which were changed by this warrior... and many will continue to be changed, even now that he has gone home.

The occasion of his recent victory prompted me to share something with you I have only come to understand over the last ten years or so, and that is this: *God's will does not always come to pass.*

Does that sound... wrong... somehow?

How many times have we heard, though normally stated in softer, more compassionate terms, "Just get over it! It *happened*, so it was obviously God's will; accept it and get on with your life!"?

Sometimes it takes the form of, "Don't grieve about the loss of your child, God just needed another angel and called your child to Him."

Sometimes it sounds like, "Of course it was God's will that people flew those airplanes into those office buildings; they could not have done it were it not God's will!"

Or have you heard, "That storm drowned all those people because they lived in such a sinful city! It was God's punishment for their sin."

Why would I suggest that "God's will" is not the answer to everything that happens on the earth? Well, because He told me so. And He told you too.

The Bible is replete with references to the will of God. One such verse is [2 Peter 3:9](#), where the Lord uses Peter to tell us that it is not His will that "any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

But Jesus tells us in [Matthew 7:13-14](#) to "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.

What is the will of God? *That all be saved.*

What will happen? *Only a few will be saved.*

Does the will of God come to pass in this instance? *No.*

Does that mean when we see tragedy occur we can say that it was NOT God's will? No. But it does mean that we can not automatically say, "It happened, so it was the will of God."

Does this mean that God is not all-powerful, or that God is not "in control?"

Let's consider those two points separately.

Is God all-powerful? Omnipotent? Absolutely. Without question.

Does that mean He forces you to make good choices? That He prevents consequences of your actions from coming about? That He prevents consequences of sin in a person's life from affecting bystanders innocent of that sin? In other words, does the omnipotence of God mean that He prevents bad things from happening to good people? (We'll forego discussion that our definition of "good" does not align with Jesus' definition of "good" in [Luke 18:18](#).) The answer is "No!" to each question.

Does He WANT you to make good choices? YES.

Does He MAKE you choose wisely? NO.

Does He abhor what Satan has done in this world by introducing sin and its wages? YES.

Does He prevent sin, and eliminate its consequences? NO.

What about the "in control" comment? Is God in control? By definition, God's omnipotence means that He is indeed "in control." Perhaps the more relevant issue though is, "Does He choose to *exercise* that control?" Hmmm...

Consider **Ephesians 6:12**:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

What are (who are) “the rulers of the darkness of this world?” What does “rule” mean? Might “control” be a good definition?

Was God “in control” of you the last time you disobeyed His will?

Was God “in control” of the drunk who killed the parents of a 3-year-old and crippled her for life?

Was God “in control” of the men who took over the airplanes on September 11, 2001?

Well, what about **Romans 8:28**? Doesn't it say there that everything that happens is good? NO, it does not say that. It DOES say that whatever DOES happen, God is able to work out for good. Does it say that we will be able to understand the good that He works out? No. Does it say that “the good” will come about in our lifetime? No. This verse bears testimony that in the universal, grand, cosmic sense, God is indeed fully “in control” – else the promise that He can work “all things for good” could not be true. But it also bears testimony to the fact that He does NOT control the individual actions of every person, else *there would be no “bad things” He would need to work towards good!*

I don't remember the source of this quote that I found a while back, but it expresses so well this concept: “God's will does not prevent tragedy, but transforms it.”

You may think that I've avoided the real point to all this, the underlying question that can not help but be raised, and that is: “But then why do bad things happen?”

There is a one-word answer to that: Sin.

We live in a fallen world. A cursed world. Because of sin. (Read the **first few chapters of Genesis** again.) And the creation *groans* because of it. Even the saved, the redeemed, *groan* as we wait for our redemption.

Can God act in our behalf in this cursed world? *Definitely.*

Does God act in our behalf in this cursed world? Again, *absolutely!*

Does everything that happens in this cursed world:

- happen because God wills it? NO.
- happen because God causes it to happen? NO.

*As many of you know, with my commute schedule I listen to several sermons a week. Probably 5 or 6 on average. I heard a sermon a few years back where the preacher said that **God knows the future infallibly**. I collected my thoughts about that and sent him this note:*

Dear [Preacher],

I guess the saddest conclusion I drew from your message is that (were I to believe the points you made) there is no longer any reason at all to pray.

Now I suppose that to some people the “power of prayer” is due to some inward-focused, psychiatric-self-help benefit – but not to me. The power of prayer is that God listens to us, with the Spirit’s help, and He ACTS (or not) as he sees fit. We’re even told the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. And I do not believe for a minute that the “availeth much” has to do with any “feel good” result we accrue ourselves as we pray, but rather the “availeth much” points to God and what He does as a result of our request.

But now, from your message, I have learned that this never happens – that God never changes His mind about anything, because He already knows what will happen in the instance we are praying about. And so what He knows will happen, will happen. And no amount of effectual ferventness on our part will ever move Him to change what He already knows will occur. *Because if He did, that would mean that He did NOT “know the future” after all, because He changed what He knew would happen to something else instead.*

Fortunately however, the Bible tells me something different. God *does* listen to prayer, and He *can* be moved to act – even contrary to what He had planned or known ahead of time.

- A. **2 Kings 20**. Hezekiah was ill and almost dead.
- B. God sent Isaiah to Hezekiah. Isaiah told him: “The Lord says...you are going to die; you will not recover.”
- C. God does not lie.
- D. God told Hezekiah what was to happen in the future. He would not recover from his current sickness; if fact, he would die from it.
- E. Hezekiah’s prayer moved God to change His mind.
- F. The thing that God said WOULD happen DID NOT happen.
- G. Did God know the future in this case? No
 - a. This is the only possible answer here.
 - b. To answer YES would be to say that the Lord lied to Hezekiah.
 - c. But the Lord does not lie, and therefore
 - d. The actual future turned out to be different than what God said it would be.
- H. Did He know what He INTENDED to do in the future? Yes
- I. Did He change His mind, and do something else instead? Yes
- J. Why? Because of prayer.

So in this case of Hezekiah,

- Did God know the future, but lie to Hezekiah in order to trick him into praying?
- Or
- Did God know what WOULD come about without His intervention, but then based on Hezekiah's prayer, intervene?

If we want to play games, we could say:

- Well, God knew that Hezekiah would pray his prayer, but that since he hadn't prayed his prayer YET, God could tell him, "You will die," knowing that this would not really occur, but to scare Hezekiah and get him to pray his prayer.
 - I reject this. It would mean God lied to Hezekiah.

If God always tells the truth, rather, SINCE God always tells the truth, the TRUTH was that Hezekiah was going to die from his illness. At that time, that was Hezekiah's future. That was the future that God "saw" for Hezekiah. But it did not come to pass.

- So, did God know Hezekiah's future infallibly?

In **Jeremiah 3**, God tells us He thought that Israel would return to Him... but Israel did NOT.

- The future that God thought would happen did not happen.

Moving down to **Jeremiah 19**, God tells us that it *never entered His mind* that people would burn their sons in the fire as a sacrifice to Baal.

- A "future" came about that God did not see ahead of time.

What about the instances, e.g., **Numbers 14**, where God told Moses He would do something (God does not lie), and then He did not do it?

There are so many examples of this.

Remember the incident where God kept telling Moses (**Exodus 13**), "Try this, but if it doesn't work go to Plan B. And if they won't believe you with Plan B, then try Plan C."

- Did God know what sign they were going to believe, or not?

God can absolutely *determine* that a given course of action will play out. *He can make any course of action play out that He desires.* That is not the same as saying that He “knows the future infallibly.” To say that is to say that prayer is meaningless. I see no other possible conclusion.

God changes His mind... (1)

2 Kings 20:1-6

20 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the Lord says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

² Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord, ³ "Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

⁴ Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the Lord came to him: ⁵ "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the leader of my people, 'This is what the Lord, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the Lord. ⁶ I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"

What just happened here?

- God changed His mind.
- God was letting Hezekiah know what nature was going to cause him to do. (die)
- Hezekiah said, "Please, no!"
- Augustine (early church father) - "Just a test of Hezekiah."
 - OK, you can get away with that two or three times, but if you try that 80 or 100 times in scripture, you've got a problem. And all through scripture, we see God respond/react to our prayers.
- How honest was God?
 - Was Hezekiah going to die? (do we agree on that?)
 - Did God then say, You are NOT going to die? (for another 15 years)

God changes His mind... (2)

1 Kings 21:21-29

²¹ 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will consume your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel — slave or free. ²² I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have provoked me to anger and have caused Israel to sin.'

²³ "And also concerning Jezebel the Lord says: 'Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of ^a Jezreel.'

²⁴ "Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds of the air will feed on those who die in the country."

²⁵ (There was never a man like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. ²⁶ He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.)

²⁷ When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.

²⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite: ²⁹ "Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

God PLANS for the future...

Isa 48:3-5

- ³ I foretold the former things long ago, my mouth announced them and I made them known; then suddenly I acted, and they came to pass.
- ⁴ For I knew how stubborn you were; the sinews of your neck were iron, your forehead was bronze.
- ⁵ Therefore I told you these things long ago; before they happened I announced them to you so that you could not say,
- 'My idols did them; my wooden image and metal god ordained them.'

This is one of those passages people look at and say, "It is clear that God knows the future!"

- But be very very careful. It says, there were things He decided.
 - **It's very different to say**
 - **I have decided that these things will happen, vs.**
 - **I know everything which is going to happen**
 - He has *determined* some things

Was this part of God's Plan??

Gen 6:5-6

⁵ The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. ⁶ The Lord was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain. [NIV]

The classic explanation is: This is all God's PLAN!

- Really? LOOK at this verse.
- The reason this is so very important, is that we have way too many Christians telling way too many atheists, "God knows everything in the future, everything that's in the plan, and when your baby dies it's because God needed another angel in heaven," and atheists get disgusted with this and walk away from God.
- **We need to get more realistic about what God actually SAYS and DOES. Does this look like it was all part of God's plan? Other versions than NIV use a different word than GRIEVED. Some use the word REPENTED:**

KJV

And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

Gen 6:5-6 (AMP)

⁵ The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination *and* intention of all human thinking was only evil continually.

⁶ And the Lord regretted that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved at heart.

What God THINKS does not necessarily come to pass...

Jer 3:6-7

⁶ During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. ⁷ **I thought** that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it.

Jer 3:19-20

¹⁹ "I myself said,

"How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.'

I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.

²⁰ But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel," declares the Lord.

God does not foresee all events...

Jer 7:31

³¹ They have built the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in the fire — something I did not command, *nor did it enter my mind*.

Have you read that before? He didn't just say it once, where we could question a translation... He kept saying it.

Jer 19:5

⁵ They have built the high places of Baal to burn their sons in the fire as offerings to Baal — something I did not command or mention, *nor did it enter my mind*.

Jer 32:35

³⁵ They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters ^c to Molech, though I never commanded, *nor did it enter my mind*, that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

Num 14:10-12

¹¹ The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? ¹² **I will strike them down with a plague** and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

But instead of that happening ("strike them down with a plague")...

Num 14:20-23

²⁰ The Lord replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. ²¹ Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the Lord fills the whole earth, ²² not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times — ²³ not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

By the way, the standard argument is: The Lord was testing Moses. Well, then He would have known it [Moses' character] back in Exodus 32; He didn't have to do it 4 more times!

Various extracts from Schoenheit document:

Hebrews says God knows everything knowable.

Hebrews 4:13

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God can predict the future, and our future is certain and secure, not because God "knows" what will happen, but because God is powerful and can make things happen.

The Bible says God can predict the future: He declares the end from the beginning:

Isaiah 46:10 (HCSB):

I declare the end from the beginning, and from long ago what is not yet done, saying: My plan will take place, and I will do all My will.

The question is not, "Can God predict the future," but "How does God predict the future?" There are two models for God's ability to predict the future.

- * The Knowledge Model: God knows the future
- * The Power Model: God can make His prophecies of the future happen

The word "omniscient" is not in the Bible. This is important to know because many people think of God as "omniscient" only because they have heard it over and over and therefore think it is in the Bible. It is not.

Problem #1 with the Knowledge Model explanation:

* It means God's emotions are not real. If the Knowledge Model is correct and God has total foreknowledge, then the emotional responses that the Bible says God feels are not "real," they are a figure of speech.

* What is God trying to say? A major purpose of figures of speech is to add emphasis or clarity to the Bible. But what emphasis and clarity would the so-called examples of *anthropomorphism* explain? When God tells us He is angry, or joyful, or repentant, if He is not, then what is He trying to say? How does His telling us He feels emotions when He really does not help us "understand His essence and will"?

* Why would God tell us He has emotions if He does not? It leaves us guessing about what

God is trying to tell us, which is precisely why orthodox theologians disagree with each other about why God says He has emotions.

The end result of the Knowledge Model is that the Bible, instead of teaching us about God, tells us things that are not true about God and thus actually ends up being misleading, confusing, and even disingenuous, and also making our understanding of God unclear and uncertain. Why would God tell us He has emotions if He does not?

The Open View keeps God from being responsible for evil.

A difficult theological issue that scholars have been dealing with for centuries is how to reconcile that God is love with all the evil in the world. The Knowledge Model really has no good explanation for the evil in the world. If God knew about all the evil that would occur when

He created the universe before He ever created it, but created it anyway, then He is responsible for the evil in the world. In contrast, the Power Model well explains how God can be love and yet the world be evil because it explains people's free will, and thus their actions, in terms of God not having exhaustive foreknowledge.

God says that He uses His power to bring to pass the things He foretold.

When the Bible describes God's being able to predict the future, it does so in terms of the Power Model, not the Knowledge Model. This is very important because we Christians are supposed to get our theology from what the Bible says. If God said He gave prophecies because He already knew about them, we should believe that. But when God says He fulfills prophecies by acting on what He said, then we should believe that.

Isaiah 48:3 (HCSB)

I declared the past events long ago; they came out of My mouth; I proclaimed them.
Suddenly I acted, and they occurred.

God never says, "I knew things would occur, so I said they would." He said they would occur, then He acted to make them occur. Thus, the Power Model explains what the Bible actually says, while the Knowledge Model does not.

In Jeremiah 18:1-11 God makes it clear that when He gives a prophecy, if the people change, the prophecy may change. This fits the Open View and the Power Model perfectly. But if God knew the future, He would know when the people would change and thus never give any prophecy that needed to be changed. How are we to explain prophecies that change from the Knowledge Model point of view? If someone know something he says is not true, but say it anyway, he is a liar.

Below are some examples of God changing prophecies He gave:

David

- * 2 Sam. 7:11. Rest from your enemies
- * 2 Sam. 12:10. Now, therefore, the sword will not depart from your house.

Solomon

- * 2 Sam. 7:12, 13. Establish his kingdom
- * 1 Kings 11:11. Tear the kingdom away from you.

Ahab (murdered Naboth and his family and stole his property)

- * 1 Kings 21:21, 22. I am going to bring disaster on you
- * 1 Kings 21:29. I will not bring the disaster in your lifetime

Hezekiah

- * 2 Kings 20:1. Put your house in order, because you will die, you will not recover.
- * 2 Kings 20:5. Hezekiah was given 15 more years

Jonah

- * Jonah 3:4. Nineveh will be destroyed in 40 days
- * Jonah 3:10. God did not bring the destruction

Zedekiah

- * Jeremiah 34:4, 5. Zedekiah will die peacefully.
- * Jeremiah 52:10, 11. Zedekiah was captured by Nebuchadnezzar, his children were killed while he was made to watch, then he was blinded and led away captive and died in prison.

Great people of the Bible apparently did not believe God had exhaustive foreknowledge

It would be difficult to compile a complete list of the people who received words from God and did not believe they were “fixed,” but instead believed that what God said could be changed. The list below shows that people from Abraham to Jesus dialogued with God under the assumption that what they wanted and things they did really mattered. It is difficult—some would say impossible—to understand and explain what God is doing in these conversations if He made statements to people that He knew were not true and then pretended to change when they interacted with Him. In contrast, if our future is not already past in the mind of God, and is open, then we can understand and explain the conversation.

* Abraham bargained with God about the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah rather than think God’s will on the matter was “fixed” (Gen. 18:23-33).

* God told Moses that “the elders will listen to you,” but Moses answered, “But what if they don’t?” (Ex. 3:18; 4:1).

* God told Moses He would destroy Israel and build a nation from Moses (Exod. 32:10). Moses did not accept that and interceded for Israel, at which point God “relented” and did not do what He said he would (Exod. 32:14).

* Ahab did not accept that he and his house would be destroyed, but repented and God delayed the fulfillment of His prophecy (1 Kings 21:20-29).

* God told Hezekiah he would die, but Hezekiah did not think that could not be changed (2 Kings 20:1-6).

* God told Amos about the destruction of Israel, but Amos did not believe that was set in stone and pleaded with God, who then changed (Amos 7:1-6).

* Even in light of Scriptures such as Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, Jesus still prayed to God, “If it is possible, let this cup pass from me.” Jesus apparently thought that the future was not absolutely fixed.

Nineteen objections to the Open View asked and answered

1) It is not “orthodox” (It has never been the accepted theology of the Church)

Answer 1: That is not a valid objection. The Church has not been correct on many things and has changed many doctrines over the years. Furthermore, denominations differ on what is true. For example, one hundred years ago there was an almost universal condemnation of speaking in tongues by the denominations, but now more and more denominations are accepting it. Nevertheless, it is still condemned by many denominations.

Answer 2: We assert that truly biblical people held to the open view but did not think about it in those specific terms. The evidence in the Bible is that people dialogued with God and spoke with Him as if the future was not “fixed.” All through the ages the prophets challenged God and argued with Him to get Him to change His mind. Abraham’s arguing with God over the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a good example. If those biblical people did not feel that the future was “open,” then they would simply have asked God what was going to happen and that would have ended the discussion. Many committed Christians do the same thing the great people in the Bible did: they fast and pray in order to change things, and many Christians testify to the fact that “prayer changes things.”

If the future is fixed, then prayer does not actually change anything and there is no need to pray or ask God to intervene in our lives (that is, by the way, the majority belief about prayer—that it does not change anything—which can be confirmed by checking almost any mainstream Bible dictionary on “prayer”). If the future is fixed, we should just be asking God what is going to happen.

Answer 3: There have been individuals (Calcidius – 5th century theologian), and groups (some 19th century Methodists) who believed in a limited view of God’s knowledge. Also, the exact extent of God’s knowledge has often been discussed and debated in Christendom.

2) The Open View limits God

Objection: The Open View limits God, and in effect, keeps God from being God.

Answer 1: When non-traditional views of the Bible are set forth, a common objection to them is, "That keeps God from being God." That is a bogus objection. Nothing keeps God from being God. He is who He is no matter what we believe. But we Christians are supposed to get our understanding of who God is from the Bible, which is what God tells us about Himself, not from tradition, or mathematical logic. If the Bible reveals that God has exhaustive foreknowledge, then He does. If it reveals that He lives in time with us and experiences things just as we do, then that is what He says about Himself and that is what we should believe.

Answer 2: God limited Himself when He created the universe and placed restrictions on Himself. For example, He cannot lie, and He cannot make a round square. Once God defines reality, He abides by His definition. To do otherwise would make Him untrustworthy. Furthermore, it is apparent that God wanted to limit Himself so that He could be in a genuine relation with the freewill beings He created, and truly love and be loved.

Actually, both the traditionalist view of God having exhaustive foreknowledge and the Open View limit God. The question is which limit is the correct and biblical one.

The Open View recognizes limits that pertain to God based on what He says about Himself: that He does not know certain things, that He sometimes repents and changes His mind, and that He is in relation to His creation and responds to them with anger, joy, displeasure, or laughter, according to the situation.

The traditional view limits God by saying that He does not really feel the emotions the Bible says He feels, He cannot be changed or moved by anything we do or any prayer we pray, and any discussion we have with Him in which He seems to be responding to us is just make-believe. The traditional God may be all powerful and all knowing, but He is cold and unresponsive. To us, the limits placed upon God by the Knowledge Model are unsatisfactory and unbiblical.

3) The Open View means God is not "perfect"

Answer: To answer this objection we must define "perfect." According to the Knowledge Model, the word "perfect" is understood in the same way that Plato defined it; in terms that are basically mathematical. Plato's theology said that God was "perfect," which meant He could not change because any change would have to be for the worse. That is because if God could have changed for the better, then He would not have been "perfect" before. However, the Bible never says God is "perfect" in the mathematical sense of the word, as Plato took it (Plato's theory of perfect "Forms" can be studied in any good encyclopedia).

We assert that God is "perfect" in the Hebraic sense of the word. The Hebrew concept of perfect is not mathematical, it is relational, which is why the Bible says Job was "perfect" (Job 1:1 KJV and Hebrew text). God is perfect in the sense that He cannot do anything He does any better.

4) The Open View makes God not in control of the world

Answer 1: God does not "control" freewill beings, and He does not "control" the world in the sense that His will always happens. Many of the things that happen on earth are outside the will of God.

Answer 2: "Control" has never been considered a godly characteristic. "Controlling" people are considered ungodly. Love is by nature not controlling. 1 Corinthians 13:5 says that love is not self-seeking, but control is all about one's own desires. Love guides, directs, encourages, and helps, but it does not control. The Open View explains how God can truly be love and genuinely guide and help people.

5) The open view makes God dependent on man

Objection: The open view makes God dependent on man; for example, it makes God dependent on man's decision to obey, or pray, or even get saved (who will God spend eternity with?).

Answer: We assert that there are things in which God and man are dependent on each other: they are interdependent. In any genuine relationship, healthy co-dependency or interdependency is a good thing. We depend on people all the time, and much of the richness of life is in our mutual dependence and the help we give each other. A person who seems incapable of healthy co-dependence is called "undependable." God tells us over and over that we help with His work, which is why we are God's co-workers (1 Cor. 3:9). God makes us His children, His co-workers, and His ambassadors. When humans willingly defy Him, He becomes angry precisely because He has expectations concerning us and often depends on us (Rom. 1:18).

6) The Open View causes Christian's to lose their confidence in God.

Objection: If God does not know the future, then how can we be confident that what will happen is God's will?

Answer 1. God will bring about the final end He promised: He has the power to do that, and has demonstrated that many times in history.

Answer 2. We cannot understand how anyone who believes that everything what happens on earth today is the will of God can have any confidence in God. If the torture, killing, maiming, rape, child abuse, sexual slavery, and general evil and mayhem we see on earth is the will of God, how can we be confident in Him? To us, the Open View of God is a major part of restoring confidence in God. Christian theology has so perverted what God does that men like Darwin quit training for Christian ministry and became atheists. Similarly, even if God foreknew the world would be the cruel place it is, and created it anyway, that does not restore confidence in God. Why would God knowingly create such a horrible place? Does He not have the power to have made some changes before He created anything so things would be better? We contend that the Knowledge Model does not explain the evil in the world around us and actually undermines people's confidence in God, and the Open View, by giving a sound and reasonable explanation for the things we see in the world around us, restores our confidence in God.

7) God says He does not change His mind

Objection: There are two verses that say God does not change His mind. Num. 23:19 is one of them: "God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" (cp. 1 Sam. 15:29). Also, Malachi 3:6 says God does not change.

Answer 1: The Bible has a couple verses that say God does not change or change His mind, but it also has many verses that show God changing His mind. Obviously, both cannot be true. When we examine the few verses that say God does not change His mind, we find they can be explained in their context. In contrast, the times that God changes His mind appear straightforward and are accompanied by contexts that show that God did in fact change His mind.

□ Num. 23:19 is one of the two verses that says God does not change His mind. It is a prophecy given by Balaam who Balak the king of Moab hired to curse Israel. Even after Balaam blessed Israel the first time, the king of Moab thought that if Balaam tried again, he would get a curse prophecy from God upon Israel. The point God was making in that context about not changing His mind was that once God had finally decided to do something, such as bless Israel, He was going to do it.

□ 1 Sam. 15:29 is about king Saul, and that God had taken his kingdom away and would not change His mind. It was a specific comment for a specific situation. Not too long after, God said He would establish Solomon's kingdom, then changed His mind and took it away when Solomon sinned. Thus we see that God does change His mind about some kings, but He was not going to change it about king Saul.

□ Malachi 3:6 is often quoted that God does not change. We need to read the verse and context to see what God meant. "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed." What God is saying is that even though Israel was deep in sin, God was not going to "change" the multiple promises He had made to bless and preserve them, and change and destroy them.

It is actually worth rereading Numbers 23:19, because it actually supports the Power Model of God's predicting the future. It says, "Does he speak and then not act?" God says what He will do in the future, and then He acts and does it.

Answer 2: It is important that we notice that when God changes His mind He never changes His character. God is love, good, righteous, etc., and when He changes His mind due to His relationship with people, His righteous and loving character never change.

8) God exists outside of time; He is timeless

Objection: God created time, so He is outside of time and experiences all time, past and future, at one time.

Answer 1: The Bible never says God exists outside of time. Time is just our way of measuring change. Orthodox theologians can say God is "timeless" because they say He does not change and is totally static. But we deny that and assert that we have a God who changes in relation to us, and genuinely relates to us. As He relates to us and to His creation, He experiences what we know as time. For example, when He created the days in Genesis, He had to wait for the first day to be finished before creating the second day.

Answer 2: The Bible says God experiences time: 2 Peter 3:8: "But do not forget this one thing,

dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.” This statement is made in view of God being patient with mankind. Also, the Bible says that God waits for people (Isa. 30:18; KJV; ESV; NRS), but that cannot be if in fact God is outside of time, because He would then be experiencing the unfinished and finished reality at the same time, and therefore would not actually be waiting at all. Again, we are faced with either saying the Bible can be read and believed at face value when it says that God waits for people, or it is making a statement that is not true, which means it is hard to explain both why God said it at all, and what it really means. It would be giving us a false picture of God.

9) If the Open View is true, then God cannot exactly predict the future

Answer 1. Many people are unsettled by the Open View of God because they think it is saying that God does not know the future any better than we do, and that, understandably, would be very disconcerting. But the Open View acknowledges that God can and does make very accurate predictions, and He does so based on a combination of knowledge and power.

God knows everything that can be known in the universe (all past and present events; all chains of cause and effect; all possible options). Thus, like a good chess player He can see far down the road, and on that basis alone He can make predictions that to us seem impossible. When we add His immense power to His exhaustive knowledge of the past and present, it is easy to see that God does not need to have exhaustive foreknowledge to predict the future extremely accurately. We must remember that God did not tell us He foretold the future because He knew it, but because He acted and made His predictions happen: Isaiah 48:3 (HCSB): I declared the past events long ago; they came out of My mouth; I proclaimed them. Suddenly I acted, and they occurred.

Answer 2. It is an interesting “objection” that “If the Open View is true, then God cannot exactly predict the future,” because in the Bible God speaks prophecies that do not come true and that He changes (this point is covered above). If God knew what He said in a prophecy was not going to come to pass, and He said it anyway, especially if He said it in a way that people believed it fully, then He is a liar.

Answer 3. The fact that God cannot exactly predict every event does not mean that God’s promises about our everlasting future are in doubt. God created the universe, and He has the wisdom and power to make promises come true.

10) The Open View of God means God is not eternally prepared for every eventuality.

Answer: The Bible never claims God is “eternally prepared for every eventuality.” He just needs to be able to deal with what actually happens, and He certainly is that.

11) The Bible says that God “foreknew” Jesus.

Objection: God foreknew Jesus, and foreknew the crucifixion. God loved Jesus before the foundation of the world (John 17:24, 25). Why would God love Jesus “before the foundation of the world” if mankind had not sinned yet? A number of verses say or imply that Jesus was “foreknown:” 1 Pet. 1:21 (“foreordained” in some versions is *proginōskō*, “foreknown”).

Answer 1: The questions about Jesus are the most difficult to understand from the point of view of the Open View of God. The Open View does not have “pat answers” for everything. It is a developing theology, and we are learning. But the Open View does so far have the best answers and explanations for the majority of philosophic and scriptural problems concerning God.

Answer 2: Jesus Christ is not only the savior of mankind, he is the savior of the universe—God’s entire creation, and the Genesis 1:1 creation was ruined before the foundation of this world, which God started to reform in Genesis 1:3. The Bible says that the whole creation is in bondage and waiting for the redeemer (Rom. 8:19-22). Even if Adam had not sinned, the creation still would have needed to have been restored. Thus, God planned for, and “foreknew” the Redeemer before the foundation of this world. Jesus was foreknown and was God’s plan of redemption for His creation.

Answer 3: Adam and Eve did not need to sin in order for Jesus Christ to be necessary. As we have seen, he was necessary before mankind. However, Adam and Eve were commanded to multiply and fill the earth. Given what God had already experienced with the rebellion of the angels, no doubt He anticipated that some of Adam’s descendants would sin, and therefore would need a redeemer. At some point in the distant past He planned for that redeemer for mankind before He prepared the world for mankind and created Adam and Eve. The redemption of man, in case of sin, was not an afterthought, but a carefully considered contingency.

12) God says in Romans that He foreknew the people who would be saved.

Objection: How could God “foreknow” the people who were going to be saved? (Rom. 8:29: “For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers”).

Answer: The word “know” (and also “foreknow”) are sometimes used idiomatically. We know that “foreknow” is being used in an idiomatic way in Romans 8:29 just by reading the verse. If God has perfect foreknowledge, as is commonly taught, then He “foreknew” everyone. But Romans 8:29 says that “those He foreknew” He predestined to be saved, which would mean that every person is going to be saved. But that is clearly not the teaching of Scripture, so what is the verse saying?

The idea of “knowledge” is often used idiomatically to mean love and special attention. That is the way the same Greek word is being used a few chapters later, in Romans 11:2, which says, “God did not reject his people [the Jews] whom he foreknew.” This verse is not saying that God simply knew about the Jews ahead of time. It is saying God “loved” or “paid special attention to” the Jews. Similarly, Ruth said to Boaz: “Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me” (Ruth 2:10; in the LXX the Greek word is still *epiginōskō*; cp. Ruth 2:19). Ruth was not saying that Boaz learned about her, but that he took care of her. Similarly, Psalm 144:3 says God “takes knowledge” of man, meaning He loved him and took care of him. Romans 8:29 says that people that God especially loved (who are the ones who accepted Him), He planned for them to be “conformed to the image of His Son,” i.e., saved. The word “remember” is another word related to knowledge that is used idiomatically for love and special attention. In Genesis 8:1 God “remembered” Noah and the animals and took care of them. In 1 Samuel 1:11 Hannah prayed that God would “remember” her so she would get pregnant, and 1 Samuel 1:19 says God remembered her and she got pregnant. The Psalmist asked God not to remember him (pay attention to him) because of his sin, but “remember” him because of God’s goodness (Ps. 25:7).

13) Ephesians says God chose those who would be saved before the foundation of the world

Objection: the Bible says God “chose us” before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-6, 11, 12). Therefore He had to know who would be saved and who would not be.

Answer: This question has been central to the Calvinist-Arminian debate for centuries. We need to pay attention to the fact that Ephesians 1:5, etc., do not just say God knew who was going to be saved, but that He “chose us” before the foundation of the world. The Calvinists claim that the only way God could legitimately “choose” someone for salvation before the foundation of the world was if there was “irresistible grace” such that the person who God chose could not refuse salvation. Thus they say that before the foundation of the world, God chose some people to salvation and left others (or chose others) to be damned.

The Arminians (named after James Arminius, not the Armenians, from Armenia) reject the Calvinist interpretation and point out that in chapters such as Ephesians 1, the pronouns are plural. In other words, it was not individuals who were being chosen to salvation, but “us,” the group, the Body of Christ, the Church. In other words, before the foundation of the world God planned out the Administration of Grace with the grace and blessings it would enjoy, knowing that some people would get saved and join the Church. However, it is the individual’s choice whether or not to get saved and be a part of the Church.

We agree with the Arminians, and assert that God did plan for a special group on which He would pour His grace, and He planned for that group before the foundation of the world. What we would add was that in God’s planning for the Church, He did not know exactly who would join by getting saved, and who would choose not to join.

14) Types, shadows, and illustrations

Objection: God put many “types,” “shadows,” and “illustrations” in place in the Old Testament to illustrate the New Testament, and He could not have done that unless He knew what to illustrate.

Answer: God did put many types and illustrations in the Old Testament, but He did not have to have exhaustive foreknowledge to do that, He just needed a plan and then ways to illustrate it. God did plan for the redemption of His creation, and illustrated it by types and shadows.

□ Most of the types and illustrations in the OT are broad and sweeping, and are fulfilled in God’s plan only in a very general way.

○ Abraham’s sacrifice of Isaac showed the Father willing to sacrifice his son and the son willing to die, but nothing in the illustration required exhaustive

foreknowledge; that was all part of God's plan for redemption.

- The record of Joseph portrays a humiliated man becoming second in command to the ruler, but that did not require exhaustive foreknowledge either.
- The Flood and Noah's Ark portrayed the destruction of the wicked and the salvation of the righteous, but in general, not specific, terms.
- All of the types and illustrations have things that do not "line up" with the reality—it is usually only some of the major themes that line up and create the illustration.
- In the Abraham example, Jesus did not walk anywhere for three days, nor was there a fire, altar, knife, etc. Furthermore, Jesus died but Isaac did not.
- In the Joseph example, Jesus was never a slave; he did not rule in Egypt, did not have eleven brothers, etc.
- In the Flood record, there is no boat or flood on the Day of Judgment.
- The types are not "fixed" or "set in stone." However, there is usually no way to tell if an illustration that was designed to be more exact on some point got "missed" because someone did not walk it out fully. We do know of one type that was "broken" because of man's disobedience (and this "broken type" could not have happened if God always knows exactly what someone will do: every type would work out perfectly):
- God tried to picture Christ by two rocks in the wilderness that would pour forth "living water." The first rock Moses struck with his rod (Ex. 17:6). The second rock Moses was just supposed to speak to (Num. 20:8). This was supposed to portray that Christ would be smitten but after that would only have to be asked and he would pour forth living water. Unfortunately, Moses became so angry and frustrated with the Israelites that he hit the second rock too (Num. 20:11). This made God so mad He immediately spoke to Moses and told him that he would not be allowed to enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:12). If God knew that Moses would disobey His command and be punished, but went through the whole scene (including the feigned anger) anyway, then what is He doing, and how are we supposed to make sense of His actions? In contrast, the Open View allows us to read and understand the record perfectly: Moses had been so faithful for years that God was caught off guard by Moses' disobedience, and reacted in anger.

15) Rhetorical Questions

Objection: God uses rhetorical questions in the Bible, such as when God asked Adam and Eve, "Where are you" (Gen. 3:9), or asked Cain, "Where is your brother" (Gen. 4:9). So when God said "Now I know" to Abraham (Gen. 22:12) or said that He tested Israel to know what was in their heart, that was rhetorical too.

Answer: While God's asking rhetorical questions explains some of His questions, it does not explain all of them. It is misreading the text and context of Scripture to make all of God's questions rhetorical. While it is sometimes difficult to tell a rhetorical question from a genuine question, some questions are clearly rhetorical and some statements are clearly not. When God asked Adam, "Where are you," the knowledge was available to God, and it was Adam who needed to know where he was (fallen; in need of a savior). When God said, "Now I know," in the record of Abraham in Genesis 22, in the entire record He is the only one who actually learned anything. Therefore the evidence is that God's question was literal. Especially when we study every question God asked, the best explanation of them is that many were literal, and the Open View explains why God needed to ask them, which is that He did not know the answer.

16) God says the Devil will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire

Objection: God says the Devil will be destroyed in the Lake of Fire, but if he has free will and God does not know the future, he may repent, in which case God would not destroy him. The fact that God says He will destroy him in the Lake of Fire proves God knows the future.

Answer: This objection misunderstands God's justice. God has two kinds of justice: corrective and retributive. God's "corrective" justice is designed to correct bad behavior, while retributive justice (from the word "retribution") is not designed to correct, it is retribution (repayment) for a wrong done.

We are familiar with God's corrective justice, because it is why the Bible says God "chastens" every child He loves (Heb. 12:6). God uses His corrective justice to turn us from evil and get us doing the right thing. We are also familiar with God's retributive justice. Retributive justice is

not “corrective;” it is not designed to teach the criminal anything. It is retribution for sin committed and damage done. A good example is the death penalty, which does not correct the person but is retribution from evil that has been done.⁶ There are sins that result in death. We are familiar with this in the Gospels because of the teachings of Jesus on the “unforgiveable sin” (Matt. 12:32).

When it comes to people, the Bible has examples of both God’s corrective and retributive justice. In contrast, the Bible does not give us any examples of God’s corrective justice being applied to angels or demons. It very likely happens, but the Bible does not give us any examples of it. In contrast, we see God’s retributive justice being applied to the Devil and his demons when they are thrown into the Lake of Fire.

The Bible does not tell us at what point the Devil’s sin became so great that he became subject to God’s retributive justice. Although Genesis 3:15, seen in hindsight, can be taken to mean that the Devil will be destroyed, it does not have to mean that. The phrase that the Devil’s “head” would be “hit,” or “stricken” does not force us to conclude that he would be totally destroyed (the Hebrew word can mean “hit,” “bruise” “crush, etc.). However, the destruction of the Devil was clearly foretold in Isaiah 14:15 (c. 700 BC). So we know that after thousands of years of causing death and destruction and rejecting God, by Isaiah’s time the Devil could no longer avoid being destroyed. The Devil will be destroyed because he has caused so much death and destruction that he now deserves the death penalty.

⁶ It is commonly believed that God is against the death penalty, but that is not true, as reading the Bible shows (cp.

Exod. 21:12-14, 23-25; Lev. 24:17, 21; Num. 35:16-18; Deut. 19:11-13). Furthermore, Moses, Joshua, David, and

Solomon all executed criminals, and they knew the Law. Jesus said to turn the other cheek, but he was not speaking about ignoring capital crime.

17) Jesus could not have lived a sinless life unless God had foreknowledge of it.

Objection: If God was working with only knowledge that was available to Him, Jesus could not have been sinless. There was just too much pressure to sin, and no one since Adam had even come close to being sinless. God had to work things out in His foreknowledge and plan such that Jesus would be sinless.

Answer 1: It is hard to see how God’s foreknowledge has anything to do with the statistical probability that Jesus could be sinless before dying on the cross. It was Jesus who had to make the minute by minute decision to obey God and not give in to sin, and he was fully human. How would God having foreknowledge make Christ’s work possible? What could God do by having perfect foreknowledge that He could not do with the knowledge and power available to Him as God?

Answer 2: Asserting that God’s perfect foreknowledge made it available for Jesus to live without sinning confirms our point that the Knowledge Model makes God responsible for the evil in the world. According to the Knowledge Model’s explanation of Jesus being sinless, God did not create the universe until He arranged things in His plan so that Jesus did not sin. But if He could do that, then He could have arranged things so that lots of other people on earth would not have sinned or sinned as egregiously as they do, and thus the huge amount of death and destruction on earth would not have happened (or would have been much less).

Either God can arrange things such that freewill beings do not sin, or He cannot. If He can, then He is clearly responsible for the huge amount of sin in the world. If He cannot, then His having foreknowledge would not have kept Jesus from sinning.

Furthermore, if God planned things and created the universe such that Jesus could not sin, and since all creation is “past” to God and therefore unalterable once it is created, then Jesus was not actually free to sin, so his not sinning was not a heroic feat.

18) Prophets and prophecy

Objection: The prophets could not have prophesied accurately unless God had perfect foreknowledge, and if they were wrong they were considered false prophets and were killed.

Answer 1: It is commonly believed that if a prophet gave a prophecy that did not come to pass he was considered a false prophet and was executed. That is not the case.

Answer 2: Many prophets of God gave prophecies that did not come to pass, or come to pass exactly as they were foretold. In the explanations above we saw prophecies spoken by Elijah, Nathan, Jonah, and Jeremiah that did not come to pass, and yet they were true prophets and were

not executed. Also, what Agabus said about Paul in Acts 21:11 did not come to pass as he said, but he is not a false prophet either. The Open View explains why prophets can speak prophecies that do not come to pass.

Answer 3: Jeremiah 18 and God's teaching Jeremiah at the potter's house shows that God will often give a prophecy that "wakes people up" such that they repent of their sin and change. At that point, God sometimes modifies what He foretold. The classic example of this is the prophecy Jonah gave to the Ninevites that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days. The Ninevites repented and God modified the prophecy He had given and Nineveh was spared. The very nature of prophecy is that it describes what will happen if circumstances do not change. This is well understood, and is known by theologians as the conditional nature of prophecy (see Schoenheit, *Prophecy*, chapter two: "The Conditional Nature of Prophecy").

Answer 4. When a prophet declares something that will absolutely happen in the future (like the future coming of the Millennial Kingdom), either there are circumstances that allow God to know that and thus speak it exactly, or God can use the Power Model and make it happen. There is no necessity for "absolute foreknowledge" in prophecy.

19) Faith

Objection: If God does not know the future, we cannot have faith in what He says.

Answer 1: Faith is "trust," and we have to know the context of what God says before we can say we can absolutely trust Him. For example, Jonah walked into Nineveh and said, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). Did the Ninevites trust God's word to them? Thankfully, no. They repented and God altered His prophecy. Similarly, Hezekiah did not trust the word of Isaiah that he would die (2 Kings 20:1); Moses did not trust that God would destroy Israel (Exod. 32:10) and, years later, Amos did not either (Amos 7:1-6). These prophets knew that God sometimes said things He would change if circumstances changed, so they took what He said as a warning, not as an absolute statement of fact.

Does the fact that God sometimes changes what He says mean that we cannot trust God?

No, we just have to evaluate the situation in which God speaks and what He says, and weight it against the whole of His Word and His character. When God says we can be saved through faith in Christ, we can trust that promise. The same goes for His promise of restoring the earth in the future. There is no evidence that those prophecies are in any way conditional.

Answer 2: When we do trust God about what we consider His unconditional prophecies and promises, we do not base that trust on His foreknowledge, but on His ability to fulfill His promises.

If we based our trust in God on His foreknowledge, then He seems capricious and unpredictable. That is because He says things that turned out not to be correct, such as that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days and Hezekiah would die soon. If God had perfect foreknowledge and yet made those erroneous statements knowing they were wrong, then He is untrustworthy, which by definition means that we cannot have faith in Him.

In order for us to trust someone who makes erroneous statements we have to be able to explain why the erroneous statement was made. If a person tells us he will pick us up from work and take us home, but then does not show up or call, we think of him as untrustworthy. But our opinion would change if we found out that when he was on his way to get us he was in a car wreck and was taken unconscious to the hospital. Our new understanding of the circumstances would restore our trust in the person. But when it comes to God, why would He make a statement He knows is not true? If God really did know the future, but made a statement about the future He knew was wrong, then we would normally think of Him as untrustworthy and our faith in Him would be shaken. However, when we realize that God does not perfectly know the future and actually changes when circumstances change restores our faith in Him when He makes statements that do not turn out to be factually true. However, it means the future is not "fixed" but is "open."

Answer 3. More evidence that we do not need God to have perfect foreknowledge to trust Him is that most of us have people in our lives whom we trust, and they do not have perfect foreknowledge. Foreknowledge is not a requirement for trust, trustworthiness is the requirement; and trustworthiness is a part of one's character. In that light, the Orthodox view of God's foreknowledge opens the door for many more questions about God's character than the Open View does.

Answer 4. We trust God because of His character and that He has proven Himself trustworthy,

and because of His power to bring what He promised to pass (the Power Model). The Bible says we can have confidence in God because “He is able” to do what He says, not because He has perfect foreknowledge of what will happen.

2 Timothy 1:12

I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day.

God “is able” to fulfill His promises and do such things as raise us from the dead and give us new, everlasting bodies.

Appendix 1 – Scripture References in Order of Mention

1. 2 Peter 3:9
2. Matthew 7:13-14
3. Luke 18:18
4. Ephesians 6:12
5. Romans 8:28
6. Genesis 1-4
7. 2 Kings 20
8. Jeremiah 3
9. Jeremiah 19
10. Numbers 14
11. Exodus 13
12. 2 Kings 20:1-6
13. 1 Kings 21:21-29
14. Isaiah 48:3-5
15. Genesis 6:5-6
16. Jeremiah 3:6-7, 19-20
17. Jeremiah 7:31, 19:5, 32:35
18. Numbers 14:10-12, 20-23