

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!

The Openness of God – Predestination, or Free Will? (Part 1)

By Aleck Cartwright

The Openness of God – Predestination, or Free Will? (Part 1) by Aleck Cartwright

The Openness of God

A different perception of God has arisen in Evangelical Christianity that while not being new, has challenged the way we have always thought about God's nature. This paradigm shift is seen by it's authors to bring us closer to the biblical conception of God. The book is called The Openness Of God and is seen to be very controversial in it's perception of God and will have sweeping effects on every other area of evangelical thought and life.

The God shown in this book is not the immutable monarch controlling human history and man's individual lives but rather a loving and suffering Father who has chosen to allow man's actions to affect Him in very real ways.

At face value what they propose looks like Libertarian process theology with a twist of arminianism. But it seems it is actually much more. These authors introduce us to a God who is with us in time through self-limitation and does not know the future in absolute detail. This new view of God is called "the open view of God," "creative-love theism," or "free-will theism." It is extreme Arminianism, but stops short of full-on process theology.

Some definitions may be helpful at this point, there are two main theological beliefs currently accepted by the mainstream church, Arminianism and Calvinism.

Arminianism is the belief that God has given man the choice to accept or reject Him. Predestination is conditioned by God's foreknowledge of who would respond to the gospel. It is also possible for a believer to fall from grace. Man can neither of himself nor of his free will do anything truly good until he is born again of God.

Calvinism states that fallen man is totally unable to save himself, and that God's electing purpose was not conditioned by anything in man. That Christ's atoning death was sufficient to save all men, but efficient only for the elect. That God's grace is irresistible to the elect of God and that they being regenerated and redeemed will persevere in the faith.

The Openness of God – Predestination, or Free Will? (Part 1)

Less commonly accepted, is Process Theology which is more philosophically than biblically or confessionally based. Process Theology is the belief that God is evolving with the universe and does not know the future but is learning along with his creation, He is confined to time and thus knows possibilities and probabilities but He doesn't know actualities.

The Openness of God is not a new concept. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Socinians made the same argument. "God does not know, in such a way that whatsoever he knows will surely come to pass." So in regard to human choices, God knows future possibilities but not future certainties.

Both Calvinists and Arminians, along with the most part of christendom affirmed God's foreknowledge of human choices.

John Calvin wrote, "[God] foresees future events only by reason of the fact that he decreed that they take place." Jacob Arminius wrote, "[God] has known from eternity which persons should believe...and which should persevere through subsequent grace."

Christian orthodoxy has never denied God's foreknowledge of human choices. Both Arminianists and Calvinists (the whole church) do not agree with Open theology.

I believe that a defective doctrine of God would affect all areas of Christian life and leadership as well as discipleship to bring about an eroding of the glory due to God. Your theology will directly influence your leadership style and the outworking of your salvation. After all your conceptualisation of God's nature is what is imitated and lived out in daily life.

Openness theology is not necessarily an extension of Arminianism and neither is it the opposite of Calvinism, nor even a response to the calvinist tradition. Instead it appears to be another tangent in the quest to reconcile divine providence and human freedom with a little input from Process theology. The followers of this particular view are I believe genuinely concerned with preaching the word of God and the work of discipling others in Christ. Nevertheless, it does seem clear that openness theologians lack adequate scriptural grounding and are outside of the theological mainstream with regard to God's omniscience and providence. Biblically, the future appears to be less open than they propose.

Openness Theologians say that history is the combined result of what God and His creatures decide to do. God is always walking beside us, and experiencing intimately all that we go through. God is omnipotent in the sense that He is the creator of all and could control his creatures if He so wished but He chooses not to control by coercion or force, instead His role is influential and persuasive.

The argument of openness theologians is that God has been taken hostage and held captive by classic theism where His transcendence is overemphasised and His personhood as the Trinity downplayed. They say this view of God is inconsistent with the revelation of God through scripture, namely that God can suffer, grieve and repent.

One would think that the opposite of the God of classical theism would be the finite God of process theology, but the openness of God is clear that God does intervene and will certainly bring history to a conclusion in line with His will and purposes—with or without the help of mankind.

The Openness of God – Predestination, or Free Will? (Part 1)

Openness theology also teaches that any claims about the nature of God that are logical contradictions cannot be accepted in theology. It has to be all or nothing as in the case where one says that God knows the future in absolute detail and with total certainty but still leaves parts of the future open and undetermined i.e. in the case of people's decisions regarding their personal salvation.

Another tenant of Openness theology is that true freedom means being able to choose between options without any predetermination. This puts them in a position where neither determination nor predestination are an option. Ultimately it means that the creature assumes and requires a certain limited independence from God. Whereas other evangelicals and Calvinists in particular prefer to accept a more compatible idea of freedom whereby for them, true freedom is being able to do what God knows and has decided is right. Thus they choose to be totally dependant on God, and independence from God is slavery.

For openness adherents this is very foreign, because it ultimately places one in a position that seems to attribute the authorship of both good and evil to God. It is a powerful and persuasive book, but it

does have some serious problems that will prevent even sympathetic readers from embracing it as a model for life.

For instance can a self-limiting God who rarely, if ever, intervenes in the free choice and actions of man be assured that the history of this planet will end in the way He desires. For instance every decision we make can have hard hitting and lasting effects in this cause and effect world. A good example would be Peter's act of denying Christ three times. Is there a chance after Jesus told Peter that he would deny his master three times, that Peter would stay true to His master and not deny Christ and God's prediction would thus be wrong?

If God's prediction was wrong, it would mean that God makes mistakes, because God is right about Peter in this case does it mean it was just a good guess or that God really does know the future. The same goes for Jesus' prophecy of Judas as His betrayer, the bible says in John 6:64, "Jesus knew from the beginning..who it was that would betray Him." Whether Peter does or does not deny Christ or Judas does or does not betray Christ advocates of the openness of God are faced with a dilemma.

Still the real weakness in the openness view of God comes when the authors distinguish between the infinite and the personal attributes of God. This creates a tension that they cannot reconcile so they drop the ball when it matters most They embrace the personal God and lose sight of His infinite nature. Believing that God must be finite or at least limit himself to being as such, thus He does not know the future and cannot know the future while still be personal. This is very selective and the glory of God is lost in this model of God that they are encouraging us to embrace. As a result they tend to take words that mean one thing to us as mankind and finite and apply those same words and actions to God who is infinite. Words such as repent simply cannot be applied to an eternal God in the same way as they may be applied to humanity...

This article is continued in The Openness of God (part 2)...

You can also visit us at www.god-life.com

Aleck is a missionary and teacher, to read other articles by him go to www.god-life.com

Predestination

By Joyce C. Lock

Predestination by Joyce C. Lock

Predestination: some believe in it, some don't. Most enjoy the debate of it and are left straddling the fence because, at first glance, scripture seems to support both sides of the issue (being almost contradictory).

Since we know all God's Holy Word must be truth, if any of it is at all, perhaps the question that stems from the issues of predestination is a result of one's difficulty in interpretation and Satan getting pleasure in dividing us (as the author of confusion).

For those who have no idea what I'm writing about, the question is, "Do we have a choice in our salvation and every decision in our life, or are we puppets completing a play God has predestined us to fulfill? Scripture bares no contradiction once understood.

From the beginning of time, God (in His omnipotent powers) had the ability to foresee, foreknow, and look into the future. Every human was created by Him and He would love every one. Thus, even all the earth would cry out there is a God, extending the universal call to all that would receive. It was God's desire that no one would perish.

Knowing who'd carry the name "Christian", God had also seen their hearts and could choose whom He'd call for special areas of service into the future.

Being made in the image of God, we can relate to God's heart in that we were created first and foremost for the purpose of someone to love Him.

Without love being a choice, there would have been no purpose in our creation, no purpose in the cross of Calvary, as He already had a company of angels.

Once you've grown spiritually, had fellowship with God, and stood in His almighty presence, you'll never again doubt but what it was your choice. God knew what He was doing all along and there never was any confusion.

© by Joyce C. Lock

<http://my.homewithgod.com/blessingsandlessons/>

This writing may be used in its entirety, with credits in tact, for non-profit ministering purposes.

In addition to being a published author and poet, Joyce C. Lock created the religion column, "Christianity Made Simple" for Peru Daily Tribune, continues to write inspirational articles for area

newspapers, and shares further in online and e-mail ministries.



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!