

Divine Foreknowledge, Divine Control, & Human Freedom: Part I

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Outline

- ▣ Biblical basis for divine foreknowledge, divine control, and human freedom.
- ▣ Some dilemmas.
- ▣ Some proposed solutions.

Apologetic Motivations

- ✦ “If God exists then the future is determined and I am not free; I am free; therefore, God does not exist.”
[Jean Paul Sartre]
- ✦ An understanding of these issues is important in apologetics (defending the reasonableness of our faith).

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Divine Foreknowledge

- ✦ Προγινωσκο (foreknow)
- ✦ Προγνωσις (foreknowledge)
- ✦ 1 Pet. 1:2, 20
- ✦ Rom. 8:29
- ✦ Rom. 11:2
- ✦ Acts 2:23

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Broader Context

- ✦ Foreknowledge essential to the prophetic pattern that underlies the biblical scheme of history.
- ✦ Test of true prophet: Deut. 18:22.
- ✦ Jesus as prophet: Lk. 9:22; Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.
- ✦ Exclusive foreknower: Isa. 41:21-24

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Divine Foreordination

- ✦ Προορίζω (foreordain).
- ✦ Also: predestination, predetermination.
- ✦ Acts 4:28
- ✦ Rom. 8:29, 30
- ✦ 1 Cor. 2:7
- ✦ Eph. 1:5,11

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Divine Control

- ✦ Underlies the biblical scheme of history. Isa. 46:9-10.
- ✦ God's sovereignty: Job 42:2, Ps. 135:6, Prov. 21:1
- ✦ God's control: Rev. 4:11, Col. 1:17, Eph. 1:11

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Human Freedom

- ✦ Biblical message centers around human culpability.
- ✦ Fundamental implication of culpability is *freedom*.
- ✦ Freedom involves choosing (Gen. 3:13, 17; Josh. 24:15; 1 Kings 18:21) and willful act (Mt. 23:37; 2 Pet. 3:5)

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Old Controversy

- ⌘ Divine foreknowledge, divine control, and human freedom are all affirmed in scripture, sometimes in the *same* passage.
- ⌘ Problem? Recognized at least since Augustine.
- ⌘ What's the controversy all about?

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Foreknowledge & Freedom

- ⌘ If God foreknows that I will do X, then can I do otherwise?
- ⌘ How can God foreknow something that has not yet been freely decided upon?
- ⌘ If God already foreknows what is going to happen, what's the point of praying?

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Control & Freedom

- ✦ If God has complete control over all His creation according to His will, then how can humans choose?
- ✦ If humans are free to choose, then aren't humans able to act against God's will?
- ✦ If God controls what is going to happen, what's the point of praying?

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Foreknowledge & Control

- ✦ Does God have foreknowledge because He foreordained?
- ✦ Does God act by using His foreknowledge?
- ✦ Exactly what does God need to foreknow in order to have control?

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Proposed Solutions

- # **Calvinism:** God has full control (foreordains) and that's why He foreknows.
- # **Arminianism:** God uses His foreknowledge to decide how to act (have control).
- # **Openism:** God does not have foreknowledge of human free acts, but makes decisions in response to them.
- # **Molinism:** God uses "middle knowledge" to decide how to act.

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