

Divine Control & Human Freedom: Part I

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Outline

- # Biblical basis for divine control and human freedom. Also consider the closely related issue of divine foreknowledge.
- # Some dilemmas.
- # Some proposed solutions.
 - Radically different conceptions of control and freedom.

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/Foreordination

- # Προγινωσκο (proginosko)
- # Definitions:
 - to have knowledge beforehand
 - to foreknow
 - to predestinate
- # **KJV** (5) - foreknow, 2; foreordain, 1; know, 1; know before, 1
- # **NAS** (5) - foreknew, 2; foreknown, 1; knowing...beforehand, 1; known, 1.

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Divine Foreknowledge/Foreordination

- # Προγινωσκο (foreknow; also foreordain)
- # 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

- # Προοριζω (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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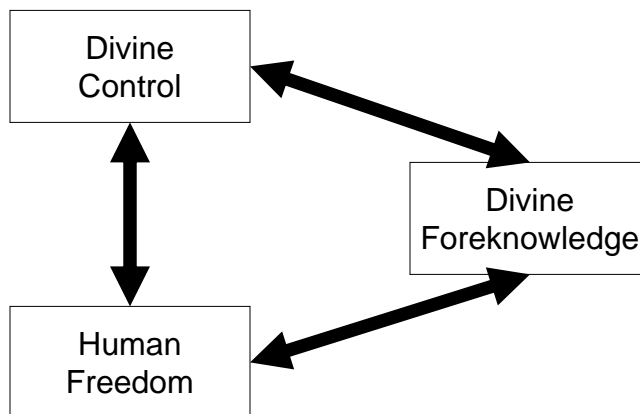
Human Freedom

- # 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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Three Doctrines in Conflict



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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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Other issues

- # If God is all-good and all-powerful, why is there evil in the world?
- # If God is in complete control, then is he the author of sinful acts?
- # If God is not in complete control, then how can He answer all prayers?

Control vs Sovereignty

- # Sovereignty: Related to status.
- # Control: Related to action.
- # Little controversy over *sovereignty*.
 - Even a deist could uphold sovereignty.
- # Controversy is over *control*.

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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Some References

- # *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, J. K. Beilby and P. R. Eddy, Eds., InterVarsity Press, 2001.
- # *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views of Divine Sovereignty and Human Freedom*, D. Basinger and R. Basinger, Eds., InterVarsity Press, 1985.
- # William Lane Craig, *What Does God Know?* Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, 2002.

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