

**Are  
Possibilities  
Possible?**



# Review

## Lesson 1:

- Problem of Evil - logic statement that if God is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnibenevolent then evil shouldn't exist
- Time
  - Not created, but an attribute of existence allowing sequence and duration

## Lesson 2:

- Open Theism
  - Future is partly open to possibilities
  - God is open to working with creation
- Bible's witness to open view and possibilities
- Non-Biblical Plato (Greek) ideas
  - Future being exhaustively settled
  - God is “outside” of time
  - Augustine made this church canon



# Review

## Lesson 3:

- Warfare Worldview Theodicy
  - Love for created beings requires freedom
  - Freedom requires risk
  - Risk requires moral responsibility
  - Moral responsibility is proportionately balanced
  - Morally responsible freedom is irrevocable
  - Freedom is finite
- Warfare Theology
  - Hostile waters
  - Cosmic beasts
  - The rebel “gods”
  - Satan
  - Jesus’ teachings on spiritual warfare



# Objections to Open Theism

Every objection I've been able to find is either a misrepresentation of this view or a different interpretation of scripture

I have not found any philosophical, theological, or Biblical arguments that disprove it

Other interpretations of scriptures exist, but when considering the entire Bible, the Open View of the future – that some things are not exhaustively certain – is the most accurate



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 1: Open theism raises serious problems for inerrancy

- James Rochford: “How can God make inerrant predictions of the future, if he doesn’t know the future certainly?”
- God can and has determined some things about the future
- God exhaustively knows all future possibilities and He is able to make things happen
- Choose Your Own Adventure books analogy
  - God determines general structure
  - God knows how story will go with any chosen path
  - God is certain about range of options and His response to any particular option that is chosen



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 2: All of the verses used to support an open view of the future are just anthropomorphic

- Anthropomorphism:
  - Greek *ánthrōpos* (human) and *morphē* (form)
  - Giving human traits and emotions to non-human entities
- All of our understanding of God is human understanding using human descriptions
  - God having a mind, will, hearing, etc
  - If we don't, we must not say anything!
- As part of creation, we have to use either God's revelation or creation itself to attempt to understand Him
  - Rom 1:20: For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.
  - God uses comparisons to parts of creation to deepen our relationship with Him and our understanding of Him



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 2: All of the verses used to support an open view of the future are just anthropomorphic

- Some texts are obviously figurative
  - Deut 4:34 – God has a “mighty hand and an outstretched arm”
  - Hosea 2:2 – God as “our husband”
  - Psalm 17:8 – God has “protecting wings”
- Nothing ridiculous or poetic about the Bible referring to God:
  - Changing His mind
  - Regretting decisions
  - Thinking and speaking about the future in terms of possibilities
- All metaphors and anthropomorphisms about God should accurately describe God in a way we understand
- Texts for open view of the future describe how God is and not the opposite of His nature or character



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 3: God distinguishes Himself from false gods on the basis of His foreknowledge

- Don Stewart: “Denying God’s knowledge of the future as well as denying His absolute control over all things is a dangerous step to make. This is especially the case since this is one of the arguments He uses to distinguish Himself from the so-called gods of the ancient world (Isa 46:9-10).”
- Isaiah 46:9-10: 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, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, ‘My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.’





# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 3: God distinguishes Himself from false gods on the basis of His foreknowledge

- God is saying that he is alive and can do what He pleases, unlike one of their idols
  - Isa 46:6-7: Some pour out gold from their bags and weigh out silver on the scales; they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god, and they bow down and worship it. They lift it to their shoulders and carry it; they set it up in its place, and there it stands. From that spot it cannot move. Even though someone cries out to it, it cannot answer; it cannot save them from their troubles.
- God knows Himself, His choices, and His will completely
- He knows how He will make creation end as opposed to how He made things begin at creation. No argument.
- Isaiah 46:10b – “**My** purpose will stand and **I** will do all that **I** please.”
- God can and does determine what He will do
  - May provide this information to warn His people or legitimize His prophets



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 4: We judge false prophets based on their inability to predict the future (Deut 18:22)

- Deuteronomy 18:22:
  - If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the Lord does not take place or come true, that is a message the Lord has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.
- Deut 13:1-3 – False prophets can accurately predict the future
  - If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, “Let us follow other gods” (gods you have not known) “and let us worship them,” you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The Lord your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul.



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 5: The Bible routinely states that God can accurately predict the future (Gen 6:13, Gen 15:13, Matt 16:21, John 13:21-27, Psalm, 139:16, John 13:38)

- God can and does determine some things about the future
- Gen 6:13: God declares what He is going to do
  - So God said to Noah, “**I** am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. **I** am surely going to destroy both them and the earth.
- Gen 15:13: God calls on Moses to bring them out
  - Then the Lord said to him, “Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there.



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- Matt 16:21, Mk 8:31, Lk 9:22: God determined that He would die and be resurrected to free mankind from the shackles of sin
  - From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.
  - He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.
  - And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”



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- John 13:21-27:
  - After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.” His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.”



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- John 13:21-27:
  - Jesus is fulfilling Psalm 41:9: Even my close friend, someone I trusted, one who shared my bread, has turned against me.
  - God has perfect exhaustive knowledge about everything in the past and present
  - Matt 26:14-16: Judas prepares for the betrayal beforehand
    - Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests and asked, “What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?” So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.
    - This is before the Last Supper



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- Psalm 139:16: Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.
  - This verse refers to the time in the womb.
  - This verse uses hyperbole, which is common in Semitic poetry
    - Greg Boyd: “The point of this passage is to poetically express God’s care for the psalmist from his conception, not resolve metaphysical disputes regarding the reality of the future.”
  - Hebrew doesn’t include a subject – what is written in God’s book
    - Days of life, days in womb, body parts in womb
    - ESV: Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
    - KJ21: Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in Thy book all my members were written, which in continuity were fashioned, when as yet there were none of them.



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- Matt 26:34, Mark 14:30, Luke 22:34, John 13:38:
  - Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”
  - And Jesus said to him, “Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”
  - Jesus said, “I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me.”
  - Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Truly, truly, I say to you, the rooster will not crow till you have denied me three times.





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- Matt 26:34, Mark 14:30, Luke 22:34, John 13:38:
  - God’s knowledge about the past, all future variables, and a person’s character makes them predictable
  - Character becomes predictable over time
    - The longer we persist in a chosen path, it solidifies our nature
    - Diminishes our possible choices in the future
  - God could predict that under certain highly pressured circumstances, he would act the way he did
    - Peter was prone to general bravado and overreacting
    - Just made a typically proud claim: “I will lay down my life for you.” (John 13:37)
    - Believed Messiah would be military leader and vanquish enemies
      - Appeared courageous around miracle-working Jesus, but then became cowardly after Jesus was arrested



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- Matt 26:34, Mark 14:30, Luke 22:34, John 13:38:
  - God lovingly used this knowledge to teach Peter an invaluable lesson about love and servant leadership
  - Three times Peter had his true character squeezed out of him
  - Three times the resurrected Jesus asked Peter, “Do you love me?” (John 21:15-17)
  - Peter was told he would die a martyr’s death (John 21:18-19)
  - Peter’s character changed and no longer saw leadership as strength and bravado, but about laying down one’s life and feeding the Lord’s sheep



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 6: God's foreknowledge doesn't limit his own freewill

- William Craig: “If knowing what he would freely do in any set of circumstances is consistent with God's freedom, it is hard to see why his knowing what we would freely do in any circumstances is inconsistent with our freedom.”
- God knows Himself, His choices, and His will completely
- God knows every possible option we may choose in any given situation
- God doesn't know every option we will choose with absolute certainty



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 6: God's foreknowledge doesn't limit his own freewill

- “God’s Book of Known Facts” Paradox
  - God sends down a book from Heaven about everything that He knows as facts about past, present, and future on June 9, 1977
  - You read about cheating on our taxes on April 12, 2032
  - You are no more free to change the future than to change the past
  - How can you be free to chose whether to cheat on your taxes on April 12, 2032 if it was a known fact on June 9, 1977?
- Freedom is the ability to choose between various possibilities
  - You are free to cheat on your taxes or not because it is possible for you to cheat on your taxes or not
  - If God has definite knowledge about the future, and God cannot be wrong, then we don't have a choice between any actual possibilities and therefore don't have real freedom



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 7: The Open Theism view doesn't square with scripture on prayer

- James Rochford: “While [Jesus] prayed for his own desires to be fulfilled, he also affirmed God’s will—not his own (Mt. 26:39). He models this for us in the Lord’s Prayer as well (your kingdom come, your will be done). Moreover, when we realize that our hearts are deceitful and wicked, we shouldn’t want our agenda to be fulfilled.”
  - Matthew 26:39: And going a little farther he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”
- If the future is already settled, why would God the Son ask God the Father if something is “possible?”
- I feel the complete opposite on prayer:
  - God wants to be in a relationship with us where we come to Him with our desires along with praise and thanksgiving



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 7: The Open Theism view doesn't square with scripture on prayer

- Matthew 6:10 – Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
  - If God's will is always done on earth, why should we pray for it to be done?
- Classical theists: prayer is simply aligning our wills to God's
  - What about intercessory prayer? If God's will is already fixed and the future known, why pray for others?
- John Sanders: “It is God's desire that we enter into a give-and-take relationship of love, and this is not accomplished by God's forcing his blueprint on us.”
- God's desire to work with us through our prayers is more evidence that supports the Open Theism position



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 8: Open Theism doesn't offer adequate comfort to believers

- Andrew Wilson: “If you are Reformed [Determinist] or Arminian, and you face a situation of intense suffering, you can be comforted with the truth that God knew this was going to happen, and it has not caught him by surprise. If you are an open theist, you cannot say that; in fact, you will probably assume that he has only just found out, just like you. Somehow that is far less reassuring.”
- God knowing that your suffering was going to happen beforehand (yet didn't stop it) is comforting?
- Especially when that very same God is the one who supposedly wanted the suffering to happen in the first place?



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 8: Open Theism doesn't offer adequate comfort to believers

- The more substantial comfort open theism offers is that God did NOT want this suffering for us, and that our intuitions of injustices are correct
- God grieves with us
- Open theism is the only theology that allows for such an empathetic God
- Many things in life are not the way God wants it to be. God suffers with us—what's more comforting than that?
- The infinitely intelligent God can anticipate every possible evil, and has a plan to capitalize on evil when it happens





# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 9: The open view seems to demean God's sovereignty

- In all free will theologies, much of what happens in world history is the result of the decisions of free agents and not God's will
  - Horrors of the world do not reflect the beauty of God's character
- Just because God doesn't always get His way, this doesn't mean his sovereignty is demeaned
- Most people mistakenly equate sovereignty with control
  - If God gives humans some control about the future, He loses sovereignty???!!!
- God is sovereign and still has power and dominion over creation despite His choice to release a measure of control to other free agents



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 9: The open view seems to demean God's sovereignty

- A more accurate and praiseworthy way for God to rule over creation is through His divine love
- God demonstrates divine power when He empowers others to make a choice to enter a loving relationship with Him or not
- God demonstrates divine power when He puts Himself into a position where His heart can grieve because of the adultery of His beloved (Hosea 11)
- God demonstrates divine power when Christ came to earth and allowed Himself to be crucified for our sins



# Objections to Open Theism

Argument 9: The open view seems to demean God's sovereignty

- This ought to be the model by which we exercise power within the body of Christ
- Luke 22:26
  - The greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves.
- Phil 2:5-7
  - In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.



# Objections to Open Theism

## Argument 10: Open Theism is just a new fad in Christianity

- Andrew Wilson: “Even the most sympathetic advocates of open theism admit that it is all-but-impossible to find in the first eighteen centuries of the Church’s history. For those committed to historic orthodoxy, that is a massive problem.”
- “Open Theism” was coined in 1980 by Richard Rice in his book, *Openness of God*
- Refers to the dual aspects of the viewpoint:
  - Future is partly “open” and not exhaustively settled in advance through either God ordaining or foreknowing it
  - God is “open” to working with creation to accomplish His will



# Objections to Open Theism

## Argument 10: Open Theism is just a new fad in Christianity

- Historical references to the ideas within open theism
  - Jewish and Islamic varieties existed before the time of Jesus
  - 321: Calcidius translated “Timaeus” into Latin with commentary advocating open view
  - Medieval proponents to open theism:
    - Abraham ibn Daud – 1110-1180
    - Peter Auriol – 1280-1322
    - Levi ben Gerson “Gersonides” – 1288-1344
    - Peter de Rivo – 1499
  - ~1600: Johannes Corvinus and other pupils of Arminius were open theists
  - 1727 – present: Many theologians have written essays and books arguing open theism viewpoints



# Objections to Open Theism

## Argument 10: Open Theism is just a new fad in Christianity

1727 Samuel Fancourt: *The Greatness Of The Divine Love Vindicated: In Three Letters*.

1732 Samuel Fancourt: *Apology, Or A Letter To A Friend Setting Forth The Occasion, Progress, And Importance Of The Present Controversy*.

1642 John Owen: *A Display of Arminianism*. Owen noted that some early Arminians, including Johannes Corvinus, a pupil of Arminius, were open theists.

321 Calcidius translates *Timaeus* into Latin with commentary advocating an open view.

1729 Samuel Fancourt: *The Greatness Of The Divine Love Vindicated: In Three Letters, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*

1730 Samuel Fancourt: *Apology, Or A Letter To A Friend Setting Forth The Occasion, Progress, And Importance Of The Present Controversy*.

1732 Samuel Fancourt: *An Appendix To A Letter To The Reverend Mr. Norman In Two Parts. Shewing First That The Eternal Certainty Of Contingent Events Cannot Be Proved; But That The Contradiction To It Is True And Demonstrable. Secondly, That The Several Arguments, Whether From Reason Or Revelation, Offered By The Rev. Mr. Bliss, Mr. Norman, And The Nameless Author, In Defence Of It, Are Weak And Inconclusive, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.*

1818 Adam Clarke: *Commentary on the Bible*, specifically his note on Acts 2:47.

1785 John Wesley: *Of the foreknowledge of God, extracted from a late author*. Wesley reprinted an extract from Ramsey's *Philosophical Principles* in his Arminian Magazine.

1820 James Bromley: *An Essay on Divine Pre-science, or The Foreknowledge of God Viewed In Connection With The Liberty Of Man In His Moral Action*.

1828 Onesimus: *Defence of a Letter To Dr. Adam Clarke, Being A Reply To The 'Observations' Of Euphronium*.

1866 William Robinson: *Biblical Studies*. Includes a chapter on divine foreknowledge. He states Scripture does not affirm the popular view.

1831 Adam Clarke: *Discourses on various subjects*.

1834 Richard Dillon: *Prevailing Religious and Philosophic Opinions Investigated*.

1868 William Taylor: *The Election of Grace*. Taylor was a prominent Methodist missionary. He includes two chapters on foreknowledge, and says "God hath a perfect knowledge of all existing things, however remote or minute; but the unborn acts of the human will are not existing things as yet." Taylor University in IN is named after him.

1874 T. W. Brents: *The Gospel Plan of Salvation*.

1878 L. D. McCabe: *The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes in Philosophy and Theology*.

1885 J. J. Smith: "Duration As Applied To God," Wilford's *Microcosm*. Smith advances arguments against the "eternal now" concept.

1879 Thomas Crompton (Canadian Methodist professor and pastor) authors two-part essay titled *Divine Foreknowledge, Moral Agency and the Contingency of Salvation* which appeared in *The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*.

1892 L. D. McCabe: "Pre-science of Future Contingencies Impossible" in *Methodist Review* (Sept).

1885 J. J. Miles: "Am I or Am I Not?" Wilford's *Microcosm*. Miles challenges the "eternal now" concept.

1889 Joseph Lee wrote an article advocating open theism which appeared in the March 1889 issue of the serial publication *The General Baptist Messenger* in Poplar Bluff, MO.

1890 Joel Hayes: *Foreknowledge of God; or The Omniscience of God Consistent with His Own Holiness and Man's Free Agency*.

1898 D. W. Simon: *Reconciliation By Incarnation*, writes "But if anything is true, it is true that man is free...God has constituted a creature, the actions of which He can only know as such when they are performed...even the Great God condescends to wait; nay more, has Himself so ordained things that He must wait, inquiring 'What will he do?'"

1890 J. S. Breckinridge defended McCabe in *The Methodist Review* and predicted that the number of individuals believing in open theism would increase.

1900 H. J. Zellee: *Nescience of God*.

321 1642 1727 1729 1730 1731 1732 1741 1748 1785 1811 1811 1818 1820 1825 1828 1829 1830 1831 1834 1839 1843 1846 1866 1867 1868 1874 1875 1877 1878 1879 1882 1883 1884 1885 1889 1890 1892 1896 1899 1900 1941 1985 1994 1998 2000

Medieval proponents/antecedents to open theism include: Peter Auriol (c. 1280-1322), Peter de Rivo (d. 1499), Levi ben Gerson or "Gersonides" (1288-1344), Abraham bin Daud (c. 1110-1180), Cyril Domb also notes support of the highly respected Achromim, Rabbi Yeshayah Horowitz (*Shelah haKadosh*) and Rabbi Chaim ibn Attar (*Or haHayim haKadosh*).

1730 Samuel Fancourt: *What Will Be, Must Be; Or, Future Contingencies No Contingencies; Or A Short Review And Fair State Of The Points In Controversy*.

1732 Samuel Fancourt: *The Greatness Of The Divine Love Vindicated In Reply to Mr. Miller's 'Principles of the Reformed Churches.'*

1729 Samuel Fancourt: *An Essay Concerning Liberty And Pre-science*.

1731 J. Greenup: *A Vindication of Human Liberty*.

1741 Anonymous: *An Essay on the Divine Pre-science and Man's Free-Agency*.

1748 Andrew Ramsey: *Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*.

1811 Edward Pearson: *Twelve Lectures on Prophecy*. "On the principles of reason it may be doubted whether God has a foreknowledge of those actions of his intelligent creatures in which they are free; and I am not aware of its being affirmed in Scripture that he has. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that such an affirmation implies what it would be impious to suppose in Scripture—an evident contradiction; for it implies no less than an event is at the same time both certain and uncertain."

1818 Verax: *A Letter to the Rev. George Burden, Editor of the Evangelical Magazine*.

1825 John Briggs: *The Remains of John Briggs*. Includes essays on the origin of evil and the foreknowledge of God.

1829 James Jones: *Moral Freedom and Divine Benevolence*.

1830 John Bonsall: *Essay on the Attribute of Knowledge in God Considered on the Grounds of Both Reasons and Revelation*.

1839 Robert Bartley: *Short Essays in Verse on Foreknowledge and Predestination*.

1843 Billy Hibbard: *Memoirs on the Life and Travels of Billy Hibbard*.

1846 Joseph Barken: *Essay in Agreement with John Bonsall's view of foreknowledge*.

c. 1867 James Morison (founder of the Evangelical Union Denomination in Scotland and founding editor of the *Evangelical Repository Quarterly*).

1874 Hans Martensen (Lutheran theologian and Bishop of Zealand): *Christian Dogmatics*.

1876 J. P. LaCroix translates the revised edition of Richard Rothe's *Theological Ethics*. LaCroix writes, "No one, as far as we know, has presented the view of the divine non-foreknowledge of the actions of free creatures with more cogency and earnestness than the late lamented Richard Rothe."

1887 A pro-open theism article by J. M. titled "The Knowledge of God in Relation to the Future" appeared in *The Evangelical Quarterly Magazine of Theological Literature*.

1882 L. D. McCabe: *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies a Necessity: Being An Introduction To The Foreknowledge of God and Cognate Themes.*

1883-4 Isaiah L. Kephart (prominent professor in the Church of United Brethren of Christ from 1889 until his death in 1908 and editor of *Religious Telescope*): "The Freedom of the Will," a series of articles; and an article by Timothy Williston titled "Thoughts Respecting the Eternal I AM," Kephart (pro) and Williston (con) engaged in an extended debate about foreknowledge in Wilford's *Microcosm*.

1884 B. F. White: "Foreknowledge in a New Light" in Wilford's *Microcosm*, writes "God being infinitely perfect, must have perfect knowledge. The perfection of foreknowledge is only absolutely found in knowing things as they are. Moral character being necessarily hinged on conditions...God's knowledge would be imperfect to know unconditionally that which He made conditional..."

1893 H. C. Burr: *Pre-science and Future Contingencies*. Argues that the future volitions of Adam were unknown to God.

1891 W. G. Williams: "Paul's Epistle to the Romans" in the *Methodist Review* (March 1891). He argues that the future choices of free agents must be unforeseen.

1894 William Major: *God can only foreknow contingent events as contingent and uncertain, and prayer can change God's purposes*.

1894 S. Hubbard: *Were all answers to prayer provided and allotted from eternity? The actions of moral agents cannot be known until they are determined by the agent.*

1896 J. Wallace Webb: *Foreknowledge and Contingency*. Webb argues that the non-existence of a fact will always prevent the divine mind from knowing it as a fact.

1941 Gordon Olson: *The Foreknowledge of God*. Olson had a huge influence in Agape Force and YWAM.

1977 Howard Elseth: *Did God Know? A Study in the Nature of God*.

1980 Richard Rice: *The Openness of God*.

1994 Pinnock et. al.: *The Openness of God*.

1998 John Sanders: *The God Who Risks*.

2000 Gregory Boyd: *God of the Possible*.

This timeline was prepared by Thomas Lukashow, April 2013.



# Importance of Waking Up to “the War”

## Seeing God’s Beauty

- Enemy-Loving
- Self-Sacrificial
- Sharp contrast to the grotesque evil in this world



# Importance of Waking Up to “the War”

## Resignation vs Revolt

- Some ancient piety was stoicism that accepted what they couldn't change
- Scripture calls us to a piety of revolt to fight evil and change the world
- Two types of intercessional prayer
  - Resignation – pray that we don't know or understand God's will, but ask for peace through this suffering
  - Revolt – pray that the individual is healed and combat anything that is standing in the way
- Lord's Prayer – God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven
  - Supposes that God's will is not being done on earth





# Importance of Waking Up to “the War”

Warfare changes how you fundamentally live

- Family takes a vacation to “get away” and decides to rent a cottage on a beach in France and kick back and relax
  - Absolutely nothing wrong with this
  - What about if this was in Normandy, France on June 5, 1944?
- The next day, they wake up to gunfire all around them with German forces on a hill and the allied forces storming the beach from boats
  - Allied generals need the cottage to care for wounded soldiers
  - Turning point of WWII and family needs to get involved and help
- What’s moral and right on June 5th became immoral and wrong on June 6th
- Our actions are different when we are in the middle of a war



# Practical Considerations of Warfare Worldview

## Theodicy and Open Theism

Why is this important?

- Anything we can learn about God's nature or character is beneficial
- Everyone has a perception of God's nature with regards to time even if they are unaware of what that nature is
  - Naming or defining something doesn't change the thing's nature
  - Naming something brings attention to it and enables better understanding



# Practical Considerations of Warfare Worldview Theodicy and Open Theism

## Exalts God's Wisdom and Sovereignty

- Three Chess Champions – all assured of winning, but which is most praiseworthy?
  - Champion 1 is playing a program that they wrote
  - Champion 2 has a printout of every move in advance
  - Champion 3 anticipates every move and has a plan in place
- Only the 3rd uses intelligence and wisdom
- Wisdom is using available information with problem-solving ability to be able to respond to intelligent agents



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## Emphasizes God's Genuine Relationality

- God is genuinely impacted by us
- God and humanity both influence one another – there's give and take
- Relationships are real to the extent both parties have an influence on one another
  - If only one party has influence, it's a monopoly and not a relationship
  - Must have reciprocity for a relationship to be authentic
- Moment by moment relationship that we sustain with God because the world is constantly changing and circumstances and opportunities are opening and closing
  - Open View encourages humanity to walk with God on a daily basis
  - Listen to the Spirit as He is moving you based on current situation



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## Squares with Our Experience

- Whatever you believe, you're going to live like an Open Theist
  - Assume that most things aren't up for you to decide, but some are
- When taking a flight, we assume that airline/money will work as expected and laws of gravity and aerodynamics still exist
  - These guaranteed facts free us to make decisions on other things
    - Choose departure time
    - Choose seat
    - Choose itinerary
  - Deliberating between options presupposes that I can decide
  - Charles Peirce: “A belief that you can't act on or that can't make a difference in how you act it out is devoid of meaning”
- We all act as though the future is partly open
  - We pray, but we still lock our doors at night



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## Squares with Contemporary Science

- Quantum mechanics tends toward openness and probabilities
  - Path Integral formula
    - Particles hop from place to place with a certain probability
    - Calculate possibility of a particle's location/velocity/spin at any given time
  - Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle
    - You can never simultaneously know the exact speed and exact location of any object at any given time
    - Act of measuring one, changes the other



# Practical Considerations of Warfare Worldview

## Theodicy and Open Theism

Helps with the Problem of Evil

- Why would God create people He knew would go to Hell?
- Why would God plead for people to accept Him if He is certain they won't respond and follow Him?
- Your choices matter



# Practical Considerations of Warfare Worldview

## Theodicy and Open Theism

### Motivates Kingdom Work

- We are the body of Christ and God's Kingdom on Earth depends on us
- Prayer really makes a difference
- We are significant – God needs us to play a role in His will for the world





# Conclusion

I do believe that possibilities are possible

- Philosophy, theology, and scripture
- Future is at least partially open and not 100% settled

Why this topic?

**GOD IS WILLING AND ABLE TO ANSWER PRAYERS**



# Conclusion

God works with us – our choices and prayers matter

- Sometimes He gets His way
- Sometimes He doesn't
- We are part of His plan to accomplish His will

End of creation and God's defeat of evil – CERTAIN

Eternity in new heaven/new earth as co-heirs – CERTAIN

Path of how to get there – uncertain

NOT a salvation issue!!!

Unity takes priority over being right in non-salvation matters

