

How Does God View the Future?

It is mostly open!

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In theology, the way God views and interacts with the future is often explained through **three main views**. Each perspective offers a different balance between divine control, foreknowledge, and human freedom.

1. Calvinism

Calvinism teaches that God **determines everything in advance**—every action, decision, and outcome. Because He predetermines all things, He also foreknows them. In this view, the future is entirely fixed by God's sovereign will. Human freedom is secondary to God's control.

2. Arminianism

The Arminian view agrees that God **knows everything that will happen**, but emphasizes that humans still have **genuine freedom** to choose. God's foreknowledge doesn't force our choices; it simply reflects them.

This was the view I held for many years. But I was always puzzled by a deep tension:

If God already knows everything I will do, how is my freedom real?

If my choices are fully known in advance, can they still be truly open?

3. Open Theism

Open Theism provides a third, compelling alternative. It teaches that God **does not control or determine all things in advance**, and likewise, **He chooses not to foreknow all future free decisions**. He knows every possibility and is perfectly wise and ready for whatever happens—but the future itself remains open. (This is why this view is called “open” theism)

This view is not about limiting God's power. On the contrary, it emphasizes His desire for a **real, dynamic relationship** with us. He chooses to leave room for our decisions, our prayers, and our love to shape history.

What Is Open Theism?

Open Theism teaches that while God knows all possibilities, He chooses not to foreknow certain future decisions in order to have a genuine, dynamic relationship with humanity—one where our choices truly matter and the future remains open.

Traditional theology—heavily shaped by Greek philosophy, particularly Plato and Aristotle—has often portrayed God as emotionally detached, utterly unchangeable, and outside of time. In this classical view, God sees the future as a single, fixed sequence of events. Everything is predetermined, and nothing truly new ever happens.

But is that really the God we encounter in Scripture?

The God of the Bible is not a cold, static abstraction. He is deeply involved in the world He created—emotionally engaged, responsive to human behavior, and even willing to change His mind. Scripture consistently portrays a God who is not bound to a rigid timeline but actively participates in a living, unfolding relationship with His people.

This leads to the heart of Open Theism: the belief that the future is not exhaustively settled, but genuinely open—a space where real choices, real changes, and real relationship happen.

The question is not whether God knows everything. He does. But just as God chooses not to control every human action, He also chooses not to foreknow certain future decisions.

Why? Because **knowing something in a fixed way often implies control over it.** If every outcome were known in advance with absolute certainty, then nothing we do would ever truly matter. It would all be part of a predetermined script.

God, in His love and wisdom, has voluntarily limited His knowledge in certain areas so that He can relate to us in real time. He wants authentic interaction—not a stage play, but a living relationship.

Of course, this doesn't mean God is guessing. He knows all possible outcomes of every situation. Imagine you're standing in a room with three doors. God knows exactly what could happen behind each one, depending on your choice. But He hasn't predetermined which one you'll walk through.

Or think of God as a master chess player. He sees every potential move and counter-move in the game of life. He is never surprised or unprepared. But He still allows you to play freely—and your choices matter.

In this view, God's omniscience is not diminished; it is dynamic and relational. He knows everything that can be known, and He responds wisely to whatever comes. This is the kind of

God we see throughout Scripture—a God who rejoices, grieves, responds, warns, relents, and invites us to shape the future with Him.

That’s why the theology is called **Open Theism**: because the future is not sealed shut, but open to real relationship and real freedom.

Six Biblical Evidences That the Future Is Open

1. God Regrets Things

Argument:

If God genuinely regrets past decisions, then those outcomes were not predetermined—His response shows He engages with history as it unfolds.

- **Genesis 6:6–7**
“The LORD regretted that He had made human beings on the earth, and His heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created...’”
 - **1 Samuel 15:11**
“I regret that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from Me and has not carried out My instructions.”
 - **1 Samuel 15:35**
“Until the day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul again, though Samuel mourned for him. And the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.”
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2. God Confronts Improbabilities

Argument:

God's surprise at Israel’s failure shows He expected a different outcome, proving that the future was not fixed but open to human response.

- **Isaiah 5:4**
“What more could have been done for My vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?”
- **Jeremiah 3:6–7**
“I thought that after she had done all this she would return to Me, but she did not...”
- **Jeremiah 3:19–20**
“I thought you would call Me ‘Father’ and not turn away from following Me. But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you, Israel, have been unfaithful to Me.”

3. God Gets Frustrated

Argument:

God's grief over finding no intercessor shows that He hoped for a different result—something impossible if all was predetermined.

- **Ezekiel 22:30–31**

"I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before Me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. So I will pour out My wrath on them..."

4. God Tests People to Know

Argument:

If God tests to find out what's in someone's heart, then He doesn't already know every future decision—He is discovering in real relationship.

- **Genesis 22:12**

"Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from Me your son, your only son."

- **Deuteronomy 8:2**

"Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart..."

- **Deuteronomy 13:1–3**

"...the LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

5. God Speaks of the Future in Conditional Terms

Argument:

When God uses words like "if," "perhaps," or gives signs for different responses, it shows the future is open—not settled—and depends on human choices.

- **Exodus 3:18 – 4:9**

– God gives Moses signs for what to do if Pharaoh does not believe.

- **Exodus 13:17**

– God reroutes Israel, anticipating what might happen if they face war.

- **Ezekiel 12:3**

"Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious people."

- **Matthew 26:39**

“My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from Me. Yet not as I will, but as You will.”

6. God Can Be Changed

Argument:

God’s willingness to change His mind proves that He does not relate to a fixed script, but responds freely to repentance, prayer, and human action.

- **Jeremiah 18:7–10**

“If at any time I announce that a nation... is to be uprooted... and if that nation repents... then I will relent... And if I announce that a nation is to be built up... but it does evil... then I will reconsider the good I had intended.”

- **2 Peter 3:9**

“The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise... but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

- **2 Peter 3:11–12**

“You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.”

Practical Implications of Open Theism

1. **It Exalts God's Wisdom and Sovereignty**

A God who can interact with countless futures and respond perfectly is far more sovereign than one who simply enforces a fixed plan.

2. **It Emphasizes God's Genuine Relationality**

God is not untouched by human emotion. He listens. He cares. He is influenced by His people, as a loving Father should be.

3. **It Matches Human Experience**

We live as though our choices matter, our prayers matter, and our obedience matters—because they do. In practice, we are all open theists.

4. **It Aligns with Contemporary Science**

The best of modern science supports an open, dynamic, and unpredictable universe. The biblical view of God fits this reality more closely than the deterministic models of classical theology.

5. **It Helps Address the Problem of Evil**

If God did not meticulously script every tragedy, then He is not the author of evil. Open Theism allows for genuine free will and moral responsibility.

6. **It Motivates Kingdom Work**

Because our decisions truly affect history and even God's actions, our mission matters. Evangelism, justice, intercession—all are infused with urgency and meaning.

7. **It Resolves Theological Paradoxes**

Many theological tensions—God's foreknowledge vs. human freedom, divine sovereignty vs. moral responsibility—are resolved when we recognize the future is open and relational.

Conclusion

The fact that God has chosen to leave the future open—not because He lacks knowledge or power, but because He desires real relationship—reveals something profound about His very nature. He is not a controlling ruler scripting every moment, but a loving Father who invites us into a living and even risky partnership.

And that means as well that life truly matters.

Every choice you make, every prayer you pray, every act of love or courage—it all carries eternal weight. We are not actors in a pre-written play. We are co-authors in a story that God is writing with us, in real time.

Because the future is open, so is hope.