

God Doesn't See the Future, He Makes the Future

Ryan Moody

May 2020 (revised April 2022)

Introduction

“Beware lest any man spoil you through **philosophy and vain deceit**, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and **not after Christ**” (Col 2:8), “But ye have **not so learned Christ**” (Eph 4:20). Theologians teach much philosophy as “Christian” doctrine. Rather than gleaning the truth from the Scriptures and submitting to it, they use the Scriptures to proof-text their philosophy which is “not after Christ.”

By philosophical reasoning, theologians have created for themselves a “God” that is an impossible being: He sees the past, present, and future concurrently and simultaneously just the same; He has always known and always will know everything there is to know; He knows every possible outcome of every contingency of everything that never even happens; He “can’t not know anything” or ever come to the knowledge of anything He didn’t already know; He never changes, never learns anything, and never has a new thought He never had before. But this is only the philosophical definition of God from theologians, not the Scriptural definition. God revealed Himself through the Scriptures and it’s what He told us about Himself that is the correct view.

Philosophers embellish God to the ‘nth degree so that any other view—including the true view of Him—pales in comparison. Therefore, any “lesser” view of God is a deficient God, therefore a wrong view. And a “lesser” view also disappoints because we want God to be as impossible as He possibly can be! We aren’t too excited to hear that God can’t see the future. But sadly, we don’t want sound doctrine but what satisfies our wants and desires, “For the time will come when **they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts** shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (2Ti 4:3).

The view of God that glorifies Him, however, is the truth about Him—the truth He revealed to us through the Scriptures and through His Son Jesus Christ. It matters not that this view measures up to the teaching of philosophers, and it matters not that this view caters to our selfish desires. If we’re truly following God, then we’ll eagerly follow the truth about Him.

Impossibilities

Because of the natural limitations we were created with, there are many things that are impossible for us but not for God. For example, we can’t know each other’s thoughts but God certainly can and does because He created our minds. We can’t instantly heal someone or raise someone from the dead but God can. The gifts of the breath in the early church were supernatural abilities from God to do what wasn’t naturally possible for human beings. The things that are impossible for humans are possible with God: “**Is any thing too hard for the LORD?** At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.” (Gen 18:14); “**I know that thou canst do every thing**, and *that* no thought can be withholden from thee” (Job 42:2); “Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, **and there is nothing too hard for thee**” (Jer 32:17); “Behold, I *am* the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there

any thing too hard for me?” (Jer 32:27); “For with God **nothing shall be impossible**” (Luk 1:37); “The things which are **impossible with men are possible with God**” (Luk 18:27).

Besides natural impossibilities, there are also logical impossibilities that even God Himself can’t do. For example, it’s been asked by some, “Can God create a rock so big that He can’t lift it?” or “Can God make a square, circle?” These are logical impossibilities that even God can’t do. Another logical impossibility is the doctrine of the Trinity—that one God consists of three co-equal persons. And the Trinitarian doctrine of hypostatic union—that Christ is a 100% divine being and a 100% human being at the same time yet still just one person.

When we read “For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luk 1:37), this was not a blanket statement that absolutely nothing is ever impossible with God. This particular quote concerned the virgin birth which certainly is impossible with human beings but not with God. These types of statements in Scripture are about things that are impossible for us but not for Him, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (Luk 18:27). However, truly impossible things are also truly impossible with God.

The future doesn’t exist

When it comes to knowing or seeing the future, we’re dealing with another realm of impossibility—not just for human beings but even for God Himself! Since the future hasn’t happened, there is nothing to know about it. There’s nothing to know about it because there’s no such thing as the future. It doesn’t exist because it hasn’t happened, and once it’s happening then it isn’t the future but the present. There is no knowledge of the future. It can’t be known because there is nothing to know. There’s no such knowledge. Likewise, seeing the future assumes there is something to see but there’s nothing to see because nothing is happening.

Also, the past doesn’t exist either because it’s not happening but has already happened. We have memories about the past, we have historical documents about it, we have audios, photos, and videos of what happened, but all of these things are only records of what happened. Actions and events only happen in the present.

All that happens—actions, activities, events, motions, processes, and situations—only happens in the present. Therefore, only the present exists. What was going to happen tomorrow while it was yesterday is what is happening today. Today was tomorrow yesterday. This very moment was the next just a moment ago.

The future is simply a concept of our minds that we think about and imagine. Jesus said “Take therefore no thought for the morrow” (Mat 6:34). It’s a very real action to think about the future but the thinking is still in the present. The main reason we should “Take therefore no thought for the morrow” is because what we do today greatly affects what’s going to happen tomorrow, while thinking about tomorrow accomplishes virtually nothing. Therefore, rather than squandering our precious time today thinking about tomorrow, we should spend it productively making a better tomorrow. Also, taking thought for tomorrow expresses a lack of trust in God. Furthermore, we have no guarantee of even being here tomorrow anyway. All we have is today because the present is all that exists.

God only knows what can be known, and doesn’t know what can’t be known. Knowledge that doesn’t exist can’t be known even by God. Since the future doesn’t exist, then there is no such knowledge. And since there’s no knowledge of the future, then even God doesn’t know the future. If there was something to know

or see in the future, then certainly God could know and see it. But since there is nothing to know or see, then even God can't know or see it.

The passing of time

God can't see the future because there is no future. Well, there is a future as long as the present continues. But the next thing to happen in the continuation of the present isn't the future but just more of the present. We never reach the future because there is no such thing. It's simply a concept of our minds. The passage of time is just the present continuous, and the present is continuing with God the same as it is with us. The difference is our perspective of time because with God the present has always continued and always will.

The philosophy of theologians is that God somehow lives outside the passing of time so that eternity past and eternity future is exactly like the present to Him. They claim that somehow the past, present, and future are all just the same to Him. But this isn't what Scripture teaches, "For a thousand years **in thy sight are but** as yesterday **when it is past**, and *as* a watch in the night" (Psa 90:4). Time passes the same for Him as it does with us because "in thy sight" time passed is in the past "when it is past." He lives in the present just like we do. The present is all there is and the present is the same for all, including God.

On the other hand, God's perspective of time is unique compared with ours, "For a thousand years **in thy sight are but** as yesterday" (Psa 90:4), "one day **is with the Lord** as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day" (2Pe 3:8). Because God has always existed and always will exist, with Him the passing of a thousand years doesn't seem very long at all. But since our life expectancy is only seventy or eighty years, "The days of our years **are threescore years and ten**; and if by reason of strength **they be fourscore years**" (Psa 90:10), a thousand years is an extremely long time period to us. Similarly, every moment is valued and treasured by someone who knows that today is their last day to live, whereas the rest of us tend to take the moments of our days for granted because we assume there will be many more days ahead. It's a similar phenomenon with the saying "Time flies when you're having fun!" Time elapses at the same rate regardless, it just seems like it passes by more quickly at times.

The actual passage of time is consistent and unchanging but the perspective of time is relative to its subjects. Take for example the perspective of time with death. When we die, we're not still alive in heaven but truly dead until we're resurrected back to life. But our perspective of the passage of the time after we are resurrected will be the same regardless of how long we were dead—death will have seemed like just a moment whether we were dead for only one day or for thousands of years. This is why sleep is used many times in Scripture as an analogy for death because it seems like just a moment or a blink of the eye whether we slept for eight hours or just one, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; **We shall not all sleep**, but we shall all be changed, **In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye**, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1Co 15:51-52).

Fulfilled prophecies

Of course the reason we just assume God knows and sees the future is because of all the fulfilled prophecies in Scripture. When taking into account specific prophecies including types, figures, and shadows, there aren't just hundreds but thousands of prophecies in Scripture. And the Old Testament records multitudes of already

fulfilled Messianic prophecies, particularly in the writings of Moses, David, and Isaiah. If there's nothing to know or see in the future, then just how has God known and seen the future to accurately foretell so many events in advance?

The issue is that we suppose the only way the future can be accurately foretold is for it to exist and therefore be seen in the present. But there's another way the future can be accurately foretold—make it happen the way it was foretold! Putting this in human terms, I could say “I’m going to pick up the pencil on my desk five seconds from now,” then in five seconds I pick up the pencil on my desk. It has nothing to do with me being able to see five seconds into the future. It's only that I did what I said I was going to do and also nobody stopped me from doing it. Putting this in God's perspective, He can bring to pass everything He says because He is powerful enough to do it and nobody is powerful enough to stop Him.

After Adam sinned, God didn't look 4,000 years into the future and see that His Son was going to become human and die on the cross, and therefore told us what He saw was going to happen, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). Rather, in the beginning God set His plan of salvation into motion through which He later sent His Son to become human and die on the cross. This wasn't about seeing the future but rather causing the future to be seen. And if this is true about the greatest events of all—Christ's incarnation, ministry, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and seating at God's right hand—then why think differently about any other even foretold?

There's no such thing as God knowing or seeing the future. He has always foretold future events by causing those events to happen the way He foretold them. He simply causes the present to happen the way He said it would in the past. He declares what will happen, then makes it happen.

God brings to pass

Here are some Scriptures stating that God does, works, and brings to pass what He declared, spoke, and purposed: “God *is* not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: **hath he said, and shall he not do it?** or hath he **spoken, and shall he not make it good?**” (Num 23:19); “**Declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times *the things* that are **not yet done**, saying, My counsel shall stand, and **I will do** all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, **I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it**” (Isa 46:10-11); “**For to do** whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel **determined before to be done**” (Act 4:28); “That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who **doeth all these things**. Known unto God are all **his works from the beginning** of the world” (Act 15:17-18); “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the **purpose of him who worketh all things** after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1:11).

God does what He says, “Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people; for **the cause was from the LORD, that he might perform his saying**, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat” (1Ki 12:15), “Know now that there shall **fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD**, which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for **the LORD hath done that which he spake** by his servant Elijah” (2Ki 10:10).

John wrote that when Jesus said, “I thirst” it was to fulfill the Scripture, “They gave me also gall for my meat; and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink” (Psa 69:21), “After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, **that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.** Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth.” (Jhn 19:28-29). It’s not that God had seen this event would happen then spoke this prophecy through David. It’s that He spoke this prophecy through David and Jesus caused it to be fulfilled by saying “I thirst.”

Prophecy isn’t foreseeing but foretelling. Fulfilled prophecies are the result of God’s word being accomplished, standing, and taking effect: “**For he spake, and it was *done*;** he commanded, and it stood fast” (Psa 33:9); “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but **the word of our God shall stand for ever**” (Isa 40:8); “I have sworn by myself, **the word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return,** That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.” (Isa 45:23); “**So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth:** it shall not return unto me void, **but it shall accomplish that which I please,** and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it” (Isa 55:11); “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my words shall not pass away**” (Mat 24:35); “**Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.** For they *are* not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Rom 9:6); “**But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.** And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” (1Pe 1:25).

God accurately foretells the future because He is powerful enough to do it and nobody is powerful enough to stop Him: “Behold, he taketh away, **who can hinder him?** who will say unto him, What doest thou?” (Job 9:12); “But he *is* in one *mind*, and **who can turn him?** and *what* his soul desireth, even *that* he doeth.” (Job 23:13), “*There is* no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel **against the LORD**” (Pro 21:30); “I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: **nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it:** and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him” (Ecc 3:14); “For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and **who shall disannul it?** and his hand *is* stretched out, and **who shall turn it back?**” (Isa 14:27); “Yea, before the day was I *am* he; and **there is none that can deliver out of my hand:** I will work, and **who shall let it?**” (Isa 43:13); “And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and **none can stay his hand,** or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan 4:35); “But if it be of God, **ye cannot overthrow it;** lest haply ye be found even to **fight against God**” (Act 5:39); “And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: ***it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.**” (Act 9:5); “Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; **what was I, that I could withstand God?**” (Act 11:17); “Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? **are we stronger than he?**” (1Co 10:22).

Knowing previously or beforehand

Statements in Scripture using the Greek verb *proginosko* or its noun form *prognosis* such as, “For whom he did **foreknow [proginosko 4267]**” (Rom 8:29), “Elect according to **the foreknowledge [prognosis 4268]** of God the Father” (1Pe 1:2), are cited by theologians to teach that God foreknows the future because He can see the future. However, both Paul and Peter used this word simply for people knowing someone previously, or knowing something beforehand, “**My manner of life from my youth,** which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, **know all the Jews; Which knew [proginosko 4267] me from the beginning,** if they would testify, that after the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee” (Act 26:4-5), “Ye therefore, beloved, **seeing ye know *these things* before [proginosko 4267],** beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of

the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness” (2Pe 3:17). People certainly can’t see into the future and this isn’t how the apostles used it with people knowing someone or something beforehand.

There are also five places where Paul and Peter used *proginosko* or *prognosis* with God knowing something beforehand: “Him, being delivered by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge [prognosis 4268] of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Act 2:23); “**For whom he did foreknow [proginosko 4267]**, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom 8:29); “God hath not cast away **his people which he foreknew [proginosko 4267]**” (Rom 11:2); “Elect according to **the foreknowledge [prognosis 4268] of God the Father**, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied” (1Pe 1:2); “Who verily was **foreordained [proginosko 4267] before the foundation of the world**, but was manifest in these last times for you” (1Pe 1:20).

These statements have nothing to do with God seeing into the future. Take the first of the five statements for example: “Him, being delivered by **the determinate [horizo 3724] counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands **have crucified and slain**” (Act 2:23). His “determinate [horizo 3724] counsel” is about God determining Christ’s crucifixion, not about seeing into the future that it was going to happen then acclimating His plan of salvation to it. And the determining of something to happen is how the Greek *horizo* is used in all other places of Scripture (Luke 22:22; Act 10:42, 11:29, 17:26, 31; Rom 1:4; Heb 4:7). Thus, the “foreknowledge of God” of which Peter spoke is God knowing something because He determined something. He knew beforehand that His people would deliver their Messiah over to death because He determined this to happen. It’s not about seeing or knowing the future.

God hardens hearts and turns hearts

God hardens people’s hearts: “**And he hardened Pharaoh’s heart**, that he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said” (Exo 7:13); “**And the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh** king of Egypt, and he pursued after the children of Israel: and the children of Israel went out with an high hand” (Exo 14:8); “But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for **the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate**, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as *appeareth* this day” (Deu 2:30); “**For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts**, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, *and* that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses” (Jos 11:20); “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will *have mercy*, and **whom he will he hardeneth**” (Rom 9:18).

The main example of God hardening hearts is the controversial hardening of Pharaoh’s heart. The reason this is such an issue is because we have a problem with God hardening people’s hearts against their wills—except, of course, when it’s in our interest for Him to do so. The Israelites had no problem with God’s hardening Pharaoh’s heart so they could escape slavery. But do they have a problem with God hardening their own hearts? If God hadn’t hardened the hearts of His people, the crucifixion of His Son wouldn’t have taken place and the world would have perished. It’s not that we necessarily mind Him hardening other people’s hearts, just not ours!

Why keep hardening Pharaoh’s heart and sending round after round of plagues when God could have easily destroyed Egypt in one fell swoop? But had He destroyed Egypt entirely, the events of the Exodus that followed wouldn’t have happened. All ten plagues were necessary for the final plague of the Passover.

Therefore, as with the hardening of Pharaoh's heart to bring about the Passover type, God hardened His people's hearts to bring about the true Passover.

And the LORD delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel; and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and **all the souls that were therein; he let none remain in it;** but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho ... And they took it on that day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and **all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed** that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish ... And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof, and **all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining,** according to all that he had done to Eglon; but **destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein** ... And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof; and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and **utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein; he left none remaining;** as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir, and to the king thereof; as he had done also to Libnah, and to her king ... And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who smote them, and chased them unto great Zidon, and unto Misrephothmaim, and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward; and **they smote them, until they left them none remaining** ... And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, **utterly destroying them: there was not any left to breathe;** and he burnt Hazor with fire ... And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, **until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.** (Joshua 10:30, 35, 37, 39, 11:8, 11, 14)

How could a loving God command the genocide of every man, woman, and child in the Promised Land? Not only that, we're even told that He hardened the hearts of those people so that they wouldn't seek peace but be utterly destroyed, **"There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel,** save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all *other* they took in battle. **For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts,** that they should come against Israel in battle, **that he might destroy them utterly,** and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses." (Jos 11:19-20). But we need only consider that had God not done this, the world would have perished. The establishment of the Davidic Kingdom in the land was necessary for the Son of God to come into the world and be anointed as the Messiah and die on the cross for our sins. It's because God so loved the world that He had to order this to save the world, **"For God so loved the world,** that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jhn 3:16).

Not only does God harden hearts but He also turns hearts and puts desires into hearts: **"He turned their heart to hate his people,** to deal subtilly with his servants" (Psa 105:25); **"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD,** as the rivers of water: **he turneth it whithersoever he will**" (Pro 21:1); "And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and **turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them,** to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel" (Ezr 6:22); **"Blessed be the LORD God of our fathers, which hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart,** to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem" (Ezr 7:27); "And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what **my God had put in my heart** to do at Jerusalem: neither *was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon" (Neh 2:12); "And **my God put into mine heart** to gather together the nobles, and the rulers, and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of them which came up at the first, and found written therein" (Neh 7:5); "But thanks *be* to God, which **put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus** for you" (2Co 8:16); **"For God hath put in their**

hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled” (Rev 17:17).

God spoke through Jeremiah about His people returning from the 70-year Babylonian captivity, “For thus saith the LORD, That **after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon** I will visit you, and **perform my good word** toward you, in causing you to return to this place” (Jer 29:10). He didn’t say that He looked into the future and saw what would happen but rather that He would perform what would happen, “I will visit you, and perform my good word.” And true to what He said, we read in Ezra that He performed His word, “Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, **that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit [breath] of Cyrus king of Persia**, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and *put it* also in writing, saying” (Ezr 1:1). God “stirred up the spirit [*breath*] of Cyrus king of Persia” in order “that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled.” This was not seeing what would happen but causing what would happen.

Why does God harden people’s hearts at times? To cause events to happen the way He foretold they would. It’s for the very reason that the future can’t be seen that God hardens and turns people’s hearts to make the future seen.

Joseph’s life

Most Christians recognize that Joseph’s life is allegorical and prophetic of the life of Jesus Christ—that his life was a microcosm of God’s plan of salvation to come. God demonstrated through Joseph’s life that He could bring to pass what He planned and stated beforehand. If He could orchestrate this one man’s life as a type of His Son to come, He certainly could orchestrate His Son’s life as well.

He caused the sons of Jacob to envy and hate their younger brother Joseph by giving him dreams that he would one day rule over them, “And his brethren said to him, **Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us? And they hated him yet the more for his dreams**, and for his words” (Gen 37:8). They tried to thwart God’s will by conspiring to kill Joseph but ended up selling him into slavery instead, “Come now therefore, and **let us slay him**, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, Some evil beast hath devoured him: **and we shall see what will become of his dreams** ... Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, **and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver**: and they brought Joseph into Egypt” (Gen 37:20, 28).

In slavery, Joseph prospered because God was with him, “**And the LORD was with Joseph**, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian” (Gen 39:2). As an image of the sinless and suffering Savior to come, Joseph was falsely accused of a crime and thrown into the dungeon. But God later gave dreams to Pharaoh and the interpretation of those dreams to Joseph so that he would be delivered from the dungeon and placed in authority over the people, “Thou shalt be over my house, and **according unto thy word shall all my people be ruled**: only in the throne will I be greater than thou” (Gen 41:40).

God then brought seven years of plenty and seven years of famine just as He had foretold through Pharaoh’s dreams, “**And the seven years of plenteousness, that was in the land of Egypt, were ended. And the seven years of dearth began to come**, according as Joseph had said: and the dearth was in all lands; but in all the land of Egypt there was bread” (Gen 41:53-54). Again, it wasn’t that God saw this would happen and adjusted

His plan accordingly, but that He caused this to happen in conformity to His plan, “Moreover **he called for a famine upon the land**: he brake the whole staff of bread” (Psa 105:16). The prosperity in Egypt and worldwide famine then became the catalyst for bringing Joseph’s brothers to him and fulfilling the dreams they had tried to prevent. Right after their father Jacob died, they all bowed and served him, “And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we *be* thy servants” (Gen 50:18). But Joseph recognized that all of this had been accomplished by God, “And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: **for *am* I in the place of God?**” (Gen 50:19).

God showed that He could use the evil intents of Joseph’s brothers against themselves to unwittingly carry out and bring to pass exactly what He intended, “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; **but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass**, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20). If God could work through people to bring to pass these events in the life of Joseph, then He certainly could do the same in the life of His Son Jesus Christ. This had nothing to do with seeing the future but rather causing the future. And if this was true in the events of Joseph’s life and Christ’s life, then why would it be different in any other events He prophesied or foretold? God brings to pass what He foretells.

God’s purpose

Paul also taught the Ephesians that God predetermined and purposed from the beginning to choose a people to Himself, “According as he hath **chosen us** in him before the foundation of the world ... being **predestinated [proorizo 4309] according to the purpose [prothesis 4286] of him** who worketh all things **after the counsel of his own will**” (Eph 1:4, 11). These chosen people would be how He would bring His Son Jesus Christ into the world to save the world, “According to the eternal **purpose [prothesis 4286] which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord**” (Eph 3:11). All of this was “after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1:11).

God’s counsel is His purpose and will. His pleasure is what will happen in the future and what will ultimately stand: “Why dost thou strive against him? for **he giveth not account of any of his matters**” (Job 33:13); “Who *is* this that **darkeneth counsel** by words without knowledge?” (Job 38:2); “**The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever**, the thoughts of his heart to all generations” (Psa 33:11); “But our God *is* in the heavens: **he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased**” (Psa 115:3); “**Whatsoever the LORD pleased, *that did he*** in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psa 135:6); “*There are* many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless **the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand**” (Pro 19:21); “*There is* no wisdom nor understanding **nor counsel against the LORD**” (Pro 21:30); “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and **as I have purposed, so shall it stand**” (Isa 14:24); “This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, *which is* **wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working**” (Isa 28:29); “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or ***being* his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel**, and *who* instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?” (Isa 40:13-14); “**My counsel shall stand**, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken *it*, I will also bring it to pass; **I have purposed *it*, I will also do it**” (Isaiah 46:10-11); “Him, being delivered by **the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God**, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Act 2:23); “For to do whatsoever thy hand and **thy counsel determined before to be done**” (Act 4:28); “**Known unto God are all his works** from the beginning of the world” (Act 15:18); “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise **the immutability of his counsel**, confirmed *it* by an oath” (Heb 6:17).

And not only *this*; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, *even* by our father Isaac; (For *the children* being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, **that the purpose [prothesis 4286] of God according to election might stand**, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, **The elder shall serve the younger**. As it is written, **Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated**. (Romans 9:10-13)

Before Abraham had any sons, God told him beforehand about the Exodus of his descendants from slavery, “Know of a surety that **thy seed** shall be a stranger in a land *that is* not theirs, and shall **serve them**; and they shall **afflict them** four hundred years; And also that nation, **whom they shall serve**, will I judge: and afterward **shall they come out with great substance**” (Gen 15:13-14). While Jacob was in the womb, God told his mother, “Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and **the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger**” (Gen 25:23).

The people that descended from Jacob indeed were stronger and mightier than the Egyptian people, “And he said unto his people, Behold, **the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we**” (Exo 1:9). This became the catalyst for them being forced into slavery as had been told to Abraham, “shall **serve them**; and they shall **afflict them**” (Gen 15:13), “Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to **afflict them** with their burdens ... And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to **serve with rigour**” (Exo 1:11, 13).

God brought to pass “the elder shall serve the younger” (Gen 25:23; Rom 9:12) by bringing Joseph’s elder brothers to Egypt to serve him, “And **his brethren** also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, **we be thy servants**” (Gen 50:18). In doing so, this prepared the Exodus to happen later, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand.” God’s purpose in choosing a people to Himself was brought about by foretelling and bringing to pass “The elder shall serve the younger.”

God’s last words to His people about 400 years before bringing His Son into the world, “**I have loved you**, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? **Was not Esau Jacob’s brother?** saith the LORD: yet **I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau**” (Mal 1:2-3). Paul’s point with “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated” is that what God foretold Rebecca about Jacob and Esau was coming to pass just as He said. God’s purpose in choosing His people, “that the purpose of God according to election might stand,” was for His Son to come into the world and for the world to be saved through Him.

God is not a victim of circumstances

Although God can’t see the future because there’s nothing to see, He is far more powerful than that. He can declare the future thousands of years beforehand, then cause it to happen just as He declared. If prophecy is simply seeing into the future and declaring it beforehand, then wouldn’t that make God a victim of circumstance? He would just have to go with the flow and plan everything around what He sees is going to happen.

Philosophical theologians, however, wrangle about all kinds of crazy concepts such as God foreseeing what will happen then changing what He saw would happen by making something else happen. But what’s the purpose in that? If He is always going to make happen what He wants to happen, then what good is it to be able to foresee what would have happened? What would have happened doesn’t even matter because it didn’t happen. If what would have happened didn’t happen then it isn’t what would have happened. There’s

no such thing as what would have happened. The only thing that matters is what does happen which is what is happening right now—the present.

It's wrong to suppose that the greater ability is seeing the future. The greater ability is causing the present. God is more powerful than being able to see what is going to happen because He causes what is going to happen. He created this universe and has full control over every aspect of it. This doesn't mean necessarily that He controls exactly what will happen with every molecule that exists. But He governs an unfathomably complex creation in which He orchestrates events to ultimately come to pass as He purposed—all the while allowing us to function with free wills yet can use us as He pleases at any time.

In human relationships, we recognize that true power isn't absolute strict control over every decision and action. A good husband trusts his wife and gives her freedom and flexibility to make decisions within certain contexts. They both sometimes make wrong decisions but they're confident they'll work together through whatever problems and consequences arise. The same is true at a place of employment. A good boss isn't a controlling micromanager. Rather, they trust their employees within reason and allow them a degree of freedom to make decisions. Good leaders know how to use the gifts, talents, skills, and abilities of those they lead to bring about the desired outcome for the organization as a whole.

This is similarly how it is with God. True power isn't utter dominance and absolute strict control: it's love and mercy; it's trust and faithfulness; it's discipline and judgment; it's laboring together toward the same purpose and goal. Our 6,000 years of human history has been fluid in which God has constantly adjusted circumstances to happen the way He purposed from the beginning and worked through people to do it. That's true power! God's wisdom and power is to thwart the plans of the evil and use them to accomplish His plans. He allows evil men to think they're doing what's in their own best interest all the while doing what's in His.

God thwarts the plans of the wicked

God sees every thought in our minds and intent in our hearts: "I know that thou canst do every *thing*, and *that no thought can be withholden from thee*" (Job 42:2); "Shall not God search this out? for **he knoweth the secrets of the heart**" (Psa 44:21); "Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, **thou understandest my thought afar off**" (Psa 139:2); "**I the LORD search the heart, I** try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer 17:10); "And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which **searcheth the reins and hearts**: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works" (Rev 2:23).

Because He knows everything we're thinking and everything we're planning or intending to do, God can easily prevent us from doing something we intended if He so chooses. He can "change the future" so to speak, not because He sees the future and changes it from happening the way it would have, but because He causes the present to happen the way He wants. Much of the time what we do in the present depends upon what we were thinking, planning, and intending in the past. And God can easily thwart our plans to prevent us from doing what we intended.

The people in Babel were endeavoring to build a tower to make a name for themselves, "And they said, Go to, **let us build us a city and a tower**, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; and **let us make us a name**, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Gen 11:4). And they likely would have accomplished this

had God not stopped them by confusing their language and scattering them abroad, “Go to, **let us go down, and there confound their language**, that they may not understand one another’s speech. **So the LORD scattered them abroad** from thence upon the face of all the earth: **and they left off to build the city.**” (Gen 11:7-8). God didn’t change the future but frustrated the people’s plans and intents for the future.

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: **and Esau said in his heart**, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; **then will I slay my brother Jacob. And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah**: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and **arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran.** (Genesis 27:41).

Because God saw the pre-meditated murder Esau had in his heart, He set into motion Jacob’s rescue. He warned their mother Rebecca so Jacob would be warned and would flee. This had nothing to do with God seeing Jacob being murdered in the future then changing the future from happening that way. It was simply that He thwarted Esau’s plans for the future.

The wicked plot and conspire against the righteous but God overthrows their plans: “And when they saw him afar off, even before he came near unto them, **they conspired against him to slay him**” (Gen 37:18); “The kings of the earth set themselves, and **the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD**, and against his anointed, *saying*, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psa 2:2-3); “For I have heard the slander of many: fear *was* on every side: while **they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life**” (Psa 31:13); “**The wicked plotteth against the just**, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming.” (Psa 37:12-13); “Hide me from **the secret counsel of the wicked**; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity” (Psa 64:2); “**For mine enemies speak against me**; and they that lay wait for my soul **take counsel together**” (Psa 71:10); “**They have taken crafty counsel against thy people**, and consulted against thy hidden ones” (Psa 83:3); “Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; **who have purposed to overthrow my goings**” (Psa 140:4); “Frowardness *is* in his heart, **he deviseth mischief continually**; he soweth discord” (Pro 6:14); “And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway **took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him**” (Mar 3:6); “Then from that day forth **they took counsel together for to put him to death**” (Jhn 11:53); “When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and **took counsel to slay them**” (Act 5:33); “And after that many days were fulfilled, **the Jews took counsel to kill him**” (Act 9:23).

God is infinitely wiser than the wise people in this world. His wisdom is to allow people to think they’re accomplishing their will when in fact they’re being used by Him to accomplish His: “But as for you, **ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good**, to bring to pass, as *it is* this day, to save much people alive” (Gen 50:20); “**He disappointeth the devices of the crafty**, so that their hands cannot perform *their* enterprise. **He taketh the wise in their own craftiness**: and the counsel of the froward is carried headlong.” (Job 5:12-13); “**There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD**” (Pro 21:30); “**And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst thereof; and I will destroy the counsel thereof**: and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards” (Isa 19:3); “Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for **the wisdom of their wise men shall perish**, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid” (Isa 19:3); “**The wise men are ashamed**, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and **what wisdom is in them?**” (Jer 8:9); “For it is written, **I will destroy the wisdom of the wise**, and will bring to

nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1Co 1:19); “For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, **He taketh the wise in their own craftiness**” (1Co 3:19).

God has regrets and changes His mind

By the time of the flood, God regretted that He had even created mankind, “**And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth**, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually. And it **repented [regretted]** the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it **grieved him at his heart.**” (Gen 6:5-6). This is a genuine statement from God Himself about His inner feelings and indicates that had He been able to see the future before creating mankind, He wouldn’t have created mankind. By this time, seeing all of the horrible wicked and evil things people were doing, He sincerely grieved and regretted the whole thing. Many people accuse God of not caring about the suffering of people but this isn’t true at all. Even He hadn’t realized just how wicked people would become yet had to faithfully finish what He started. After all, He had already foretold that His Son would come, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Gen 3:15). And godly people such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah still needed to be saved by His Son’s death on the cross. He couldn’t just destroy the entire creation and pretend it never happened!

Philosophers teach that God never has a new thought or changes His mind—that He could never intend to do one thing but end up doing something else. However, at various times through Israel’s history, God relented, held back, or changed His mind about what He was going to do: “**And the LORD repented [relented] of the evil** which he thought to do unto his people” (Exo 32:14); “And when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, **the LORD repented [relented] him of the evil**, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough: stay now thine hand” (2 Sa 24:16); “And he remembered for them his covenant, and **repented [relented] according to the multitude of his mercies**” (Psa 106:45); “If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, **I will repent [relented] of the evil that I thought to do unto them**” (Jer 18:8); “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and **God repented [relented] of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not**” (Jon 3:10).

In response to these examples of God relenting, philosophers have to fabricate a convoluted explanation of this. They’ll say that since God can see the future and therefore already knew what He would do, He only said He was going to do something different, then make it appear that He changed His mind to do what He was going to do all along. But that isn’t genuine and sincere. If God is truly that way, then He can’t be trusted. He just plays mind games with us but always does what He was going to do anyway.

God *does* relent and change His mind at times about what He intended to do. He is merciful and pitiful toward us, “**Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.** For he knoweth our frame; **he remembereth that we are dust.**” (Psa 103:13-14). Since mankind was created after the image of God, the relationship we have with our children helps us understand how God relates to us as our Father. There are times when we’re upset with our children for something they did but then remind ourselves that they’re just kids. They don’t have the maturity to do things the way we would have done them. Similarly, this is how it is with God toward us. He remembers that we’re dust—finite and limited, weak and frail. His anger toward us is pacified by our fear of Him and remembrance of our weaknesses and all the evil and suffering we’re struggling with. In other words, there are times He changes His mind for our benefit because He truly loves us.

God is compassionate and merciful when we repent. Therefore, He doesn't do to us what He would have done had we not repented. This is about the changing of outcomes—causing things to turn out differently than they would have turned out. It has nothing to do with changing the future because since the future doesn't exist, there's nothing to change! Only the present can be "changed" so to speak. Although the present can't be changed because what happens is what happened but the present can be changed in the sense that what would have happened can be altered so that something different happens. It's simply the changing of outcomes.

God spoke through Jeremiah that the evil things His people committed had never came into His heart or mind that they would ever do: "And they have built the high places of Tophet, which *is* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded *them* not, **neither came it into my heart**" (Jer 7:31); "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake *it*, **neither came it into my mind**" (Jer 19:5); "And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, **neither came it into my mind**, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin" (Jer 32:35).

That something never even came into God's mind certainly doesn't jive with the philosophy of theologians claiming that He has always known everything, can never *not* know anything, and has never had a new thought. But since He told us Himself that these evil doings never came into His mind, He couldn't have been able to see the future otherwise these things *would* have come into His mind.

God proves our faithfulness

Although God certainly knows our hearts, but because He can't see the future He doesn't know what we'll do until we do it. Therefore, He submits us to various tests and trials so that our fear of Him and faithfulness to Him will be proved: "And it came to pass after these things, that **God did tempt [test] Abraham** ... And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: **for now I know that thou fearest God**, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only *son* from me" (Gen 22:1, 12). If He had already known what Abraham was going to do then why did He declare "for now I know that thou fearest God"? The Messenger of the Lord is the pre-incarnate Son of God. He knew Abraham's heart because earlier He told him to name his son Isaac after having laughed at Him in his heart, "Then Abraham fell upon his face, **and laughed, and said in his heart**, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? ... And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and **thou shalt call his name Isaac [laughter]**" (Gen 17:17, 19). Although He knew every thought in his mind and intent in his heart, yet He still didn't know what Abraham would do until put to the test.

God proves and tests His children: "And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: **for God is come to prove you**, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not" (Exo 20:20); "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, **and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart**, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no" (Deu 8:2); "Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: **for the LORD your God proveth you**, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deu 13:3); "Knowing *this*, that **the trying of your faith [faithfulness]** worketh patience" (Jas 1:3); "That the trial of your

faith [faithfulness], being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1Pe 1:7).

Paul said that servants must be found faithful, “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover **it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.**” (1Co 4:1-2). And Paul himself had been trusted by God with the preaching of the gospel because he had been counted faithful, “According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was **committed to my trust.** And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that **he counted me faithful,** putting me into the ministry.” (1Ti 1:11-12). Paul didn’t immediately become an apostle after his Damascus road conversion. He spent many years preaching the gospel before being sent by Jesus Christ on his missionary journeys. As we prove ourselves faithful in smaller tasks, God will trust us to be faithful in larger, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luk 16:10).

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; **that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him**” (Gen 18:19). After walking with God for many years in a faithful relationship, not only had Abraham come to know God but God had also come to know Abraham. Because of all the philosophical rubbish from modern “theologians” that God has always known everything and never can come to know anything, we think God can’t come to know us any better than He already does. But this isn’t true. Relationships take time to get to know each other better and to build trust.

God uses people to carry out His plans and purposes for this creation. He did this throughout history to bring His Son into the world to save the world and is doing this right now to bring the end times to consummation as He foretold in the book of Revelation. However, He doesn’t trust all of His children equally—He trusts some more than others because some have proven themselves trustworthy more than others. God gains trust in us by testing us. He knows what we intend to do but not what we will do. Therefore, He tests and proves us first before trusting us in critical situations. Because God can’t allow failure in critical situations, He tests us first in non-critical situations. He proves His children in scenarios that don’t matter to know which ones He can use when it does matter.

Conclusion

Philosophy about God adversely affects our walk with Him and our assurance of salvation. Calvinism is a prime example of “philosophy and vain deceit ... not after Christ” (Col 2:8). It’s not after the teaching of Jesus Christ but is a confusing ideology that leaves many Christians confused about their salvation. Of course there are variations of beliefs within Calvinism but essentially it posits that God already knew in eternity past every person and their final eternal destiny—even choosing which ones would be saved. Therefore, what is going to happen with every person is what is going to happen anyway. Those that will be saved will, and those that won’t be saved won’t. Many Christians then live in fear that although they consider themselves to be one of the chosen, it could turn out that they’re not and will fall away someday with no hope of salvation. On the other hand, if they truly are one of the chosen then they’ll be saved no matter what they do or don’t do—their lifestyle ultimately doesn’t matter. Of course most won’t admit that their lifestyle doesn’t matter but counting that their salvation is forever settled certainly skews it.

Learning the truth about God helps to advance our walk with Him. Since there is no future to know, then God doesn't know beforehand who will be saved and who won't. Our salvation is in the present. We must walk with Him now by trusting Him and obeying His Son Jesus Christ as our Lord.

When it comes to our daily walk with Him, if we suppose that He already knows what we're going to do then whatever we do is what we were going to do anyway. If I play rather than pray, God already knew it and expected it. Why try to do differently? It's a convoluted thinking that what I do is what I was going to do. But the truth is that since He doesn't know the future, He doesn't know what we're going to do. This motivates us to live up to His expectations and walk worthy of Him, **"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord** unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col 1:10), **"That ye would walk worthy of God,** who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1Th 2:12).