

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE AND HUMAN FREEDOM

*“This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God,
you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.”*

Acts 2:23

Christians have long wrestled with how God can know all things while human beings still make real choices. One attempted answer is called middle knowledge, associated with Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina (1535–1600). Molina argued that God knows not only what must happen and what will happen, but also what free creatures would do in any possible situation. In this view, God can govern the world while preserving libertarian freedom.

Middle knowledge is an interesting proposal, but Christians are not required to embrace it in order to affirm both God's knowledge and human responsibility. A simpler and more biblically direct approach is to say that God truly knows the future, including future free choices, without causing those choices. Foreknowledge is not the same as predestination. Knowing what someone will freely do does not mean forcing that person to do it.

Scripture gives examples of this balance. Jesus knew Judas would betray him, yet Judas was still responsible for his sin. Peter said Jesus was delivered up according to God's “definite plan and foreknowledge,” yet those who crucified him acted with “lawless hands” (Acts 2:23). God's knowledge did not erase human guilt. Likewise, God may know our choices before we make them, but they remain genuinely ours.

This also helps us reject open theism, the view that God does not fully know future free choices. While open theism tries to protect human freedom, it weakens the Bible's teaching about God's perfect knowledge. Scripture presents God as the one who declares “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10), not as one who learns the future as it unfolds.

For everyday faith, this means we can trust God's wisdom without denying our responsibility. God is never surprised, never confused, and never threatened by human decisions. Yet we must still choose faith, repentance, obedience, and love. God's foreknowledge gives us confidence; human freedom reminds us to walk faithfully before him.

How does God's foreknowledge differ from forcing human choices?