

What is open theism?

By

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Christian basics › Theology

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Open theism is also known as openness theology and free will theism. If God is all-powerful, all-loving, and all-knowing, why do bad things happen? Lots of people want to know the answer to this question but because it seems like an all-powerful, all-loving, and all-knowing God is both able and willing to prevent bad things happening in our lives, but somehow He doesn't. Why not? There have been many answers given over the years. Some are more biblical, doing a good job of trying to take into account all of Scripture. But other answers, while attempting provide a satisfying answer, fall short of upholding the Bible. One such answer to this question is a theory called "Open Theism."

Open Theism says God is not all knowing

"Open Theism" is the theory that maintains that God is all-powerful and all-loving, but not all knowing. In short, God does not know everything that is going to happen in the future. Thus, the future is "open" for God, and for us. In

short, God is able and willing to help us at all times but since His knowledge of the future is possibly no greater than ours, He can not prevent all bad things from happening.

Open Theism fails to uphold God's sovereignty

While this theory should be commended for trying preserve God's goodness, power, and compassion towards people, it fails to uphold God's sovereignty, His integrity, His ability to save, and the certainty of Christian hope. The Bible is full of prophecy, prediction, and revelation about what will happen in the future – our salvation, the final judgment, the Second Coming of Christ, the final defeat of death and evil, our bodily resurrection, and the new heavens and the new earth. But if God does not know the future, then the future events proclaimed so boldly in the Bible are merely God's "wish list" of things He would like to do, rather than certainties, what hope do we have?

Hang on to the teaching of Scripture

As it is, while it will always be difficult to understand how God can be all-powerful, all-loving, and all-knowing yet bad things still happen, we can hang on to the teaching of Scripture that God does know the future, and has planned good and certain things for those who trust Him. Because of His great mercy, He has “caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3) and in “him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will” (Ephesians 1:11). We may not understand all of God’s ways because of our limited human capacity, but the Bible assures us that He is good and we can trust Him. His Word never fails (Isaiah 55:10-11).

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