

The Doctrine of Prophecies And their Compatibility with Open Theism

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FOUR CATEGORIES OF PROPHECIES:

All prophecies fit into one of these four categories.

1. ABSOLUTE PROPHECIES

These are prophecies of events that will inevitably come to pass. This relates to the omnipotence of God to bring about events predetermined by Himself. The matter is completely settled and certain.

Two example would be:

- God will crush the head of Satan:

"And **I WILL** put enmity between thee and the women, and between thy seed and her seed, and it shall bruise thy head." Gen 3:15

- The end of of the world:

"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**... I have spoken it, **I WILL also bring it to pass**, I have purposed it, **I WILL also do it**." Isaiah 46:10-11

2. CONDITIONAL PROPHECIES

These are prophecies of contingent events. They relate to the freewill of men. The matter is completely open and contingent.

Two examples of this would be:

- The repentance of Judah:

"Perhaps they will hear and turn every man from his evil way, that I may repent of the evil which I purposed to do unto them because of the evil of their doings." Jer 26:3

- Blessings and wrath contingent upon obedience and disobedience:

"At what instance I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instance I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them." Jer 18:7-10

3. EXTRAPOLATIVE PROPHECIES

These are prophecies that are predicted, based upon God's exhaustive knowledge of the past and the present. Looking at the pattern of the past and the circumstances of the present, our Infinite God is able to make accurate and detailed predictions of the future behind our own finite comprehension:

Examples of this type would be:

- The future disobedience of Israel

"For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that flows with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouth, of their seed: **I KNOW THEIR IMAGINATION** which they go about, **EVEN NOW**, before I have brought them into the land which I swore." Deut 31:20-21

- Peters denial:

Mark 8:31-34, Peter's heart was revealed that he greatly feared the cross. He rebuked Jesus for talking about crucifixion and the Lord rebuked Peter for His cowardice.

Mat 26:34, Jesus knew Peter's heart had not changed. And Jesus knew all the circumstances Peter would face that night, since Jesus knew the devil was orchestrating Peter's circumstances (Lk. 22:31), and predicted Peter's denial based upon his past pattern, present character, and present circumstances.

4. PARALLEL OR ANALOGOUS SCRIPTURE FULFILLMENTS

These are events found in the New Testament, which correlate with events found in the Old Testament. The scriptures used had an original meaning in the Old, yet are applicable to a situation in the New.

Examples would be:

- My Son called out of Egypt:

Hos 11:1 speaking of Israel in the Old Testament.

This is also applied to Jesus in the New Testament, Mat 2:15.

- The betrayal of a trusted friend:

Psa 41:9, David speaking of his trusted friend and counselor Ahithophel.

John 13:18, this is also applied to Jesus and his trusted friend and disciple Judas.

WHAT PROPHECIES DO NOT PROVE:

- That the future has already happened
- That God already lives in the future
- That God lives outside of time
- That God has determined everything
- That all events are foreknown as certain

WHAT PROPHECIES DO REVEAL:

- That the future is **partly settled** by God (absolute prophecies)
- That the future is **partly open** and contingent (conditional prophecies)
- That the future is **predictable** to the Divine Mind (extrapolative prophecies)
- That the future is **repetitive** and **similar** to the past (parallel or analogous prophecies)