



## Progressive Revelation: Forming Theology from Scripture Part II

**Introduction:** In the previous study we used terms to categorize God’s relationship with creation. In addition, we also identified the work in which God was involved within His creation. This week we will look at last week’s biblical categories that were listed and identify them with theological terms often used in academic environments. The goal of this study is to familiarize the participant with theological terms by associating them with terms we use on a normal every-day basis.

**Instructions:** Read the quotes below and perform the activity.

**Activity:** Knowing truth requires critical thinking. Talk about the strengths, weaknesses, snares or pitfalls, helps and benefits theology brings as understood in the quotes below. I have italicized parts of the quote that should be a focal point of attention. All of the quotes were taken from Millard Erickson’s book *Christian Theology* second edition.

1. “Theology is biblical [source-categorical]. It takes as the primary source of its content the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This is not to say that it simply draws uncritically on surface meanings of the Scriptures. *It utilizes the tools and methods of biblical research. It also employs the insights of other areas of truth [i.e. fields of study], which it regards as God’s general revelation*” (Erickson, 23).

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2. “Theology is systematic [critical source-categorical]. That is, it draws on the entire Bible. Rather than utilizing individual texts in isolation from one another, *it attempts to relate the various portions to one another to coalesce the varied teachings into some type of harmonious or coherent whole*” (Erickson, 23).

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Theology is manmade. Theology is man’s attempt to understand God through His Word in the most thorough and comprehensive way. Man attempts such a feat by working with Scripture to categorize its doctrines. Theology is like an exploded diagram of the Bible. In other words, theology seeks to see the whole in the light of its parts. Conversely theology should equally endeavor to examine the parts in light of the whole of Scripture. Discuss what could happen when man fails to view either the parts of the Bible in light of the whole or the whole in light of the parts?

**Instructions:** Reference your previous study to complete the following activity. Each heading below is defined for convenience. Where identified, the definitions below were taken from *The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

**Activity:** Draw from the first list in the first activity of your previous study to place under the following headings the individual categories you recorded. In other words, match the categories with their respective headings as they are defined below.

1. **General Revelation:** The word *general* is used in connection with God's revelation so as to make a distinction between what God has revealed about Himself through what can be experienced by the human senses / intellect vs. special revelation: that which cannot be experienced on any human level apart from divine intervention. **Definition:** God and His creation are distinct. Yet God might reveal Himself through His actions in that world...To say God reveals Himself through nature means that through the events of the physical world God communicates to us things about Himself that we would otherwise not know (*HIBD*, 1384).

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2. **Special Revelation (definition):** That which can be specifically known about God only by consultation of sacred Scriptures (*HIBD*, 1385).

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3. **Anthropology:** The word originates from the New Testament Greek term *Anthropos* which means "man" and refers to either the individual or a group such as the entire human race. Anthropology includes male and female, young and old. **Definition:** The origin, essential nature, and destiny of human beings. Human beings do not possess a knowledge of their own depraved nature nor saving knowledge of God apart from the work of the Word, both incarnate and inscribed in our hearts and minds (*HIBD*, 71).

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4. **Angelology:** The word originates from the New Testament Greek term *Aggelos* which carries the general meaning of angel as understood in the Bible. **Definition:** Created beings whose primary function is to serve and worship God...Unlike God they are not eternal or omniscient (*HIBD*, 66). Note: Depending on the author or publisher, systematic theologies may place the study of demons under Angelology as a sub category. When set apart as its own category the word *demonology* is used. For this study, we will group the elect and fallen angels into one category.

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