

# Introduction to Christian Theology

## Outline

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## Purpose of Our Study

I hope to convey a broad overview of fundamental, conservative, Christian theology. Since theology is the study of God, our ultimate goal is to know, love, and fear God more (Matt. 22:37-40).

Whether or not you have studied the Bible this way before, it will help you integrate the various truths of the Scriptures into a coherent system. If you are familiar with the broad outlines of theology already, it will help you to see our understanding of certain issues, reinforce your own understanding, and perhaps introduce you to new subtopics.

## Recommended Books

Paul Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989.

Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1999.

## Other Resources

There are many other helpful books in the area of theology. If you are interested in further study, I can give you a list of suggested reading material.

Please also see [fellowshipbibleannarbor.org/collegesundayschool.shtml](http://fellowshipbibleannarbor.org/collegesundayschool.shtml). It will have an updated version of this outline and study notes. Audio (mp3) sermons and notes and many other resources are available from the site as well.

## Outline of Study

1. Introduction
2. The Bible
3. God
4. Man
5. Sin
6. Jesus Christ
7. Salvation
8. The Church
9. Sanctification
10. Angels
11. The Holy Spirit
12. The Future

## Types of Theology

1. Biblical Theology
2. Systematic Theology
3. Historical Theology

4. Dogmatic Theology
5. Contemporary Theology

We are mainly concerned with the first two areas—Biblical and Systematic theology, with some interaction with Dogmatic theology of various types. Our interest will not lie in the study of doctrine as it developed over time (historical theology) nor with contemporary versions of theology (because truth does not change with time).

### **Source of Theological Study**

There are two main sources of theology. The lesser is called **general revelation** or **natural revelation**. These terms refer to the knowledge of God that can be derived from God's creation, whether it is nature or the conscience of man. These concepts are derived from Romans 1:19-20 and 2:15-16 as well as Psalm 19:1-6.

The greater source of theology is called **special revelation**. This term refers to the knowledge of God that is obtained through God's miraculous activity, whether it is visions and dreams, direct speech from God, or the Bible. See Psalm 19:7-11.

We make a value differentiation between the two types of revelation because general revelation can easily be confused if it is interpreted apart from the Bible. Furthermore, many things are not revealed in nature that are revealed in the Bible. For instance, a person cannot be saved from pondering nature. Salvation comes through the means of the Scriptures (Romans 10:17, James 1:18, 1 Peter 1:23).

### **The Ability to Study Theology**

We call this information about God "revelation" because it has to do with something revealed that is otherwise hidden. 1 Corinthians 2:6-16 teach us that apart from God's disclosing (revelatory) activity, we could not know the "things of God."

We need what is called **illumination** from God in order to be able to accept and understand the truths that God wants to communicate to us. Illumination is not to be confused with intelligence or a high I.Q. or some other natural ability. Illumination comes from a special work of God through the Holy Spirit that enables us to understand the things of God.

The one without this illumination (the natural man) not only **does not** accept the things of God, he is **unable** to understand those things.