

Biblical Theology Glossary

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Biblical Theology: Biblical theology is reading, interpreting, and applying the Bible the way the Bible reads, interprets, and applies itself. The Bible shows us how to understand it as we read and interpret the contours of God's progressive plan revealed in Scripture. Biblical theology forces us to take seriously the Bible on its own terms.

Redemptive-History or Salvation-History: Understanding the Bible as God's revelation to mankind in human history with the goal of redemption accomplished in Christ Jesus.

Redemptive-History or Salvation-History is synonymous with Biblical Theology.

Christocentric: Refers to the Christ-centered (centric) nature of Scripture, specifically the Old Testament.

Revelation: Refers to God revealing himself to mankind in the context of human history through his written word.

Organic and Progressive: The movement of Scripture is related (organic) and not arbitrary. In other words, the various stories of Scripture are connected together to tell God's plan of redemption. Scripture is progressive in that it is moving toward one goal (Christ).

Multiformity: Multiformity refers to the various ways in which God revealed his purposes through human authors. Specifically, multiformity refers to the various literary methods and genres employed by the biblical authors to tell this story of redemption (e.g., prophetic, apocalyptic, symbolism, narrative, poetry, metaphors, etc).

Eschatology: Comes from the Greek word *eschatos*, which means last. In theological terms it refers to the study of end-times. For our purposes the word is used to refer to God's plan having an end goal.

Christological: In theological terms it is the study of Christ. For our purposes the word is used to refer to the end goal of God's plan—Jesus Christ and the summing up of all things in him.

Textual Horizon: The word 'text' refers to the biblical text. At the textual level the interpreter seeks to understand the grammatical, historical, and cultural aspects of a particular passage of Scripture. Horizon simply refers to a particular level of interpretation. The textual horizon is the first level of interpretation.

Epochal Horizon: The word 'epochal' refers to a particular time (epoch) in God's redemptive plan. The interpreter seeks to discern where they are in the biblical storyline as they read the Bible in order to better understand God and his promises. There are many epochal divisions (e.g., Old Testament, New Testament, pre-fall, post-fall, patriarchs, exile, post-exile, gospels, post-resurrection, formation of the church, etc). The epochal horizon is the second level of interpretation.

Canonical Horizon: The word ‘canon’ refers to the whole of Scripture. Therefore, the word canonical means understanding the individual texts and epochs in light of the entire story of Scripture; specifically with respect to God’s promises fulfilled in Christ Jesus. The canonical horizon is the final and most important step of interpretation.

Promise-Fulfillment: The primary way in which the story of redemption is told is by promise and fulfillment. As God promised something in the past, so he is faithful to fulfill it in the future. There can be immediate and future fulfillments of the promises of God (e.g., seed).

Typology: Typology is symbolism rooted in the text with a future reference to be fulfilled at a later period of time in God’s redemptive plan. Types are textually and historically warranted. In other words, types can be clearly found in the biblical text and traced from one point in time to another point in time. Types correspond to the anti-type (the fulfillment) and escalate from promise to fulfillment or lesser to greater.

Allegory: Allegorical interpretation makes illegitimate connections between the Old and New Testament. Allegory is not grounded in the text nor is it historically traceable. It takes two ideas and “lifts” them out of the context of history and connects them in order to teach a “spiritual” truth.

Thick Reading: Thick is a word used to describe the context around a particular word or idea that helps define it. Scripture has a particular context (redemptive-history) that should be understood in order to correctly interpret the Bible.

Thin Reading: Thin is a word used to describe the failure of considering the context in which Scripture comes to us. The context of Scripture is redemptive-history. A thin reading does not consider this context.

Christotelic: Christotelic is a combination of the words Christ and *telos*. *Telos* is the Greek word for goal. Christotelic refers to Christ as the goal of the Old Testament with regards to the promises of God.

Ecclesiotelic: Ecclesiotelic is a combination of the words *ekklesia* and *telos*. *Ekklesia* is the Greek word for the church. *Telos* is the Greek word for goal. Ecclesiotelic refers to the church as the goal of the Old Testament with regards to the promises of God.

Already-Not-Yet: The already-not-yet dynamic refers to the promises of God found in the Old Testament as having already arrived in principle (inaugurated) because of the work of Christ. These promises are now operational for the church (e.g., Spirit, adoption, sonship, new creatures). Although the promises of God have arrived in principle and are operative, the people of God wait (not yet) for the promises of God to be fully completed (consummated) at the second coming of Christ (e.g., resurrected bodies, new heavens and new earth).