

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. William Macleod

STUDY GUIDE

Module 7:
**ESCHATOLOGY—
THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS**

Lecture 3:
**EVENTS LEADING TO THE
SECOND COMING**



The John Knox Institute
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Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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Module 7

Eschatology—the Doctrine of Last Things

1. Introduction to Eschatology
2. The Doctrine of Death
- 3. Events Leading to the Second Coming**
4. Interpreting the Book of Revelation
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Module 7:

Eschatology—The Doctrine of Last Things

Lecture 3:

Events Leading to the Second Coming

Introduction

Having begun consideration of Individual Eschatology, and having dealt with death and the intermediate state, I would now like to return to General Eschatology, and look at the events which lead up to the second coming of Christ. The return of Christ is the great hope and expectation of the church. At the point when the darkness is greatest, the Lord will return. He will judge all mankind, and will cast the devil and his angels into the lake of fire, and all those who side with him. He will receive his children into heaven, to enjoy him forevermore.

Theme: *The Events Leading to the Second Coming.*

I. Three Terms Used for the Second Coming

1. Apocalypsis—“revelation”.
 - a. The removal of the veil, showing what was hidden.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:7–8, “Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 1:6–7, “Revealed from heaven with his mighty angels.”
2. Epiphaneia—“appearance” (root word for epiphany).
 - a. 1 Timothy 6:14, “The appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
3. Parousia—“coming”.
 - a. Matthew 24:27, “So shall the coming of the Son of man be.”

Questions:

1. Which Scriptures assure us of Christ’s second coming?

2. What are the three Greek words in the New Testament that are used to speak of Christ's second coming? What do they each mean?

II. The Promised Return

1. The Lord Jesus told his disciples he would be leaving, but assures them.
 - a. John 14:18 "I will not leave you comfortless."
 - b. John 16:7, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."
2. The Lord Jesus encouraged his disciples that he would return.
 - a. John 14:1–3, "Let not your heart be troubled...I go to prepare a place for you...I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - b. Matthew 24:42, "Ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."
 - c. Matthew 26:64, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."
 - d. Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
3. When will Christ come again?
 - a. Man has made many predictions that have failed.
 - 1) Jehovah Witnesses: 1878, 1881, 1914, 1925, 1975.
 - 2) Harold Camping: 1994
 - b. Jesus said, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only"—Matthew 24:36.
4. Our duty regarding Christ's second coming.
 - a. Watch—Matthew 25:13.
 - b. Do not believe the false prophets—Matthew 24:23–24.

Questions

1. How did the Lord Jesus exhort and comfort his disciples about his departure?

2. Is any man able to predict the time of the second coming of Christ? Why?

3. How are we to understand Matthew 24:36, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only”?

4. What is our duty in regard to the second coming of Christ? How is this made plain to us in the Scripture?

III. Scriptures Regarding the Second Coming of Christ

1. Different views of Jesus’ words in Matthew chapter 24.

- a. Preterist—these events were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.
- b. Partial preterist—events up to verse 36 were fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70; and events from verses 36 on describe the end of the world.
- c. Some say that “this generation shall not pass” refers to a future “evil and adulterous generation.”
- d. Others say “this generation” refers to the Jewish race, that it will not pass till all is fulfilled.

2. To correctly understand, go back to the original questions Jesus was asked in verse 3.

- a. “When shall these things be?” referring to the destruction of the temple.
 - 1) Verse 34: “This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”

b. “What shall be the sign of thy coming?”

- 1) Verse 36: “But of that day and hour knoweth no man...but my Father only.”

3. Passages which imply that Christ's return is imminent.

a. Matthew 10:23—"Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come."

1) Jesus did already come with power at his resurrection, and at Pentecost.

b. Mark 9:1—"There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

1) Immediately follows the transfiguration where Christ's glory is seen, verse 2.

2) Jesus did already come with power at his resurrection, and at Pentecost.

4. Christ could return any day.

a. Matthew 24:42, "Watch therefore: for ye now not what hour your Lord doth come."

5. For believers, Christ comes in two ways.

a. Christ comes at the believer's death, carrying them away to heaven.

b. Christ comes at his second coming, ushering in the final judgment.

Questions:

1. What are some of the views that attempt to explain Matthew chapter 24?

2. Liberal theologians say that Christ was mistaken because he said he would return in the lifetime of his disciples. But what should our starting point be for knowing the truth?

3. Jesus was asked two questions in Matthew 24, verse 3. Which question was he answering when he said, "This generation shall not pass until all these things be fulfilled"? (verse 34) All what things?

4. Which of the two questions in Matthew 24:3 was Jesus answering when he said, “But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only” (verse 36)?

5. What other New Testament Scriptures tell us about the second coming of Christ? What do they describe?

6. What instructions did the Lord Jesus give us about our responsibility regarding his second coming?

7. In what two ways might the Lord Jesus come for his people? Which of the two ways is especially emphasized in Scripture when it speaks of his second coming?

IV. Events Which Must Occur Before Christ's Return

1. We should continue our daily lives while waiting for Christ to come.
 - a. Don't stop daily duties or employments, but watch and pray—2 Thessalonians 2:2.
 - 1) The Thessalonians quit their employments, waiting for the end of the world.
2. The events which must happen before the end, Matthew 24:4–28.
 - a. Many deceivers, false prophets, false Christs.
 - b. Wars and rumors of wars.

- c. Famines, pestilences or plagues, and earthquakes in many places.
 - d. Christians will be tortured, killed, and hated by all nations.
 - e. Many will be offended and turn from the faith, betraying one another.
 - f. The gospel will be preached to all nations.
3. Signs that the end is near:
- a. The antichrist, the man of sin will be revealed—1 John 2:18–19.
 - b. The little horn and ten horns, Daniel chapter 7.
 - c. The man of sin revealed, 2 Thessalonians 2:4–11.
 - d. The great whore, Babylon, Mother of Harlots, destroyed, Revelation chapter 17.
 - e. The conversion of the Jews.
4. Reformers and Puritans agree that Antichrist is the Pope of Rome.
- a. Rules as head of the church, wearing a crown as king of the church.
 - b. Sits in the temple of God (the church).
 - c. Persecutes the true saints.
 - d. Notorious for its fake miracles and lying wonders.
 - e. Deals in deception, leads many astray by false teachings.
 - f. Revelation 17:18, “Babylon the Great, drunk with blood of the martyrs of Jesus.”

Questions:

1. What extreme attitude should Christians avoid regarding looking for Christ’s return?

2. What events must occur before Jesus’ second coming, as listed in Matthew 24?

3. How might we understand the prophecy of the little horn, three kings, and ten horns in Daniel chapter 7?

4. What did the Apostle Paul say about the man of sin? How might we understand this sign?

5. What are the different explanations of the great whore of Babylon? How did the Reformers and Puritans understand it?

6. Most of these signs have largely been fulfilled. What is the last great event that needs to be fulfilled before the end? What will happen after that?

V. Self-Reflection

What are the thoughts of your heart about the second coming of Christ? Are you ready to meet him on his glorious return? Or are you fearful of his coming? Are you prepared and ready? How can we find strength to persevere with Christ to the end? We must lean on him by the power of the Holy Spirit, looking forward to the hope of his second coming.
