

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. William Macleod

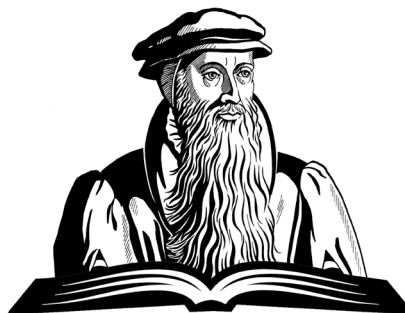
STUDY GUIDE

Module 7:

ESCHATOLOGY— THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

Lecture 5:

THE JEWS



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
- 5. The Jews**
6. Dispensational Premillenarianism
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Lecture 5:

The Jews

Introduction

Many Christians Believe that the Jews, as a people, will one day be converted to believe in Jesus as their Messiah. There is one special New Testament passage which is very important to understand when thinking of the future—that is, Romans chapter 11. We believe that God there makes great promises concerning the Jews, which are yet to be fulfilled. In Romans chapter 1, Paul makes a great statement, which, in a way sets out the theme of the epistle, and declares what it's all about. He says, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”—that's Romans 6, verses 16 and 17.

Theme: *The Jews*

I. Replacement Theology

1. Many Christians believe that the Jews have been replaced by the church, that the Jews lost their special position with God.
 - a. This is largely the case, but it's not the full story.
 - b. We must be careful not to oversimplify this matter.

Questions:

1. What does Replacement Theology assert about the relationship between the Jews and the New Testament church? How should we react to this idea?

II. The Gospel is to the Jew First

1. The special priority of the Jews, according to Paul in Romans chapter 1.
2. The special priority of the Jews in Paul's missionary journeys.
 - a. Paul always went to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles.
3. Discussion of the Jews in Romans chapters 1 to 10.

Questions

1. How does Paul explain the special priority of the Jews in Romans chapter 1?

2. What was Paul's priority towards the Jews in his missionary journeys?

3. What affection does the Apostle Paul express towards his fellow Israelites in Romans chapter 9? How does he describe their problem?

III. The Exposition of Romans chapter 11

1. Paul asserts that God had not completely rejected the Jews.
 - a. The Jews still have a special priority with God.
2. The sovereignty of God in election.
 - a. God did not cast away his people; they have a special place in God's election.
 - b. There is still a godly remnant according to the election of grace.
 - c. Being an Israelite will save no one, but election of God saves.
3. The organic connection between the Jews and the Gentile church.
 - a. If the rejecting of Jesus by the Jews brought salvation to the Gentiles, then the salvation of the Jews will bring massive revival to the Gentile church.

4. The Old Testament church is like an olive tree; the root is holy.
 - a. The Gentiles are branches grafted into the root, so we must not be proud.
 - b. By belief, the Jews will be grafted back into the root.
5. The blindness of the Jews is only “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”
 - a. God promises a full restoration of Israel to a central place in his church.
6. We should have a special concern and love in our hearts for the Jews.

Questions:

1. Had God completely rejected the Jews? How does the Apostle Paul argue about this?

2. How does the salvation of the Gentiles work for good to the unbelieving Jews? How will the Gentiles benefit from the conversion of the Jews?

3. How does Paul use the image of an olive tree to explain the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles? How do we see God’s election in this picture?

4. What does Paul mean when he says the Jews will be blinded “until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”? How should this motivate us to witness the gospel of Jesus Christ?

5. In Romans 11:26, where it says, “and so all Israel shall be saved,” what should we understand “Israel” to mean? Will the Jews be saved in another way instead of by faith in Christ?

6. How can we be sure that the Jews are still special in God's eyes from a covenant perspective?

7. What is the glorious future of the Jews that Paul was looking forward to?

IV. Answering an Objection

1. The objection: "Christ does not hint at any prospective restoration and conversion of the Jewish people."

a. Answers from Scripture:

Luke 21:24, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." This implies that a time is coming when the Jews will no longer be trodden underfoot by the Gentiles, that a time of blessing is coming for Jerusalem and the Jews.

Matthew 23:37-39, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus is saying they will not see him again until they repent and believe, rejoicing in his coming.

Ezekiel 37:5,6, 11, "Thus saith the Lord GOD unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the LORD...Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel."

Zechariah 12:10, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."

2. Historical partial fulfillment of this prophecy today.

a. The Jews have established a sovereign nation in Israel since 1948, and today there are some 30,000 inhabitants, and the number is increasing.

3. *The Westminster Larger Catechism*, Question and Answer #191 calls for prayer for the conversion of the Jews and the fulness of the Gentiles to be brought in.
- a. This shows us that the conversion of the Jews was a common view of orthodox theologians from the time of the Reformation until today.

Questions:

1. Where in Scripture do we see Christ indicating that there will be a blessed day ahead for the Jews?

2. Which Old Testament passages teach the restoration of Israel?

3. How has this Old Testament prophecy already begun to be fulfilled in our day?

4. What evidence do we have that the idea of the conversion of the Jews was by far the most common view of orthodox theologians from the Reformation until the twentieth century?

V. Self-Reflection

Do you pray regularly for the conversion of the Jews? As Christians, we should have a special concern and love in our hearts for the Jewish people, and particularly to seek their salvation. We should pray for, work for, and expect the conversion of the majority of Jews to faith in Christ. Let us devote ourselves to praying, as it says in the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q&A #191), “That the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fullness of the Gentiles brought in...that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him forever.”