

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. William Macleod

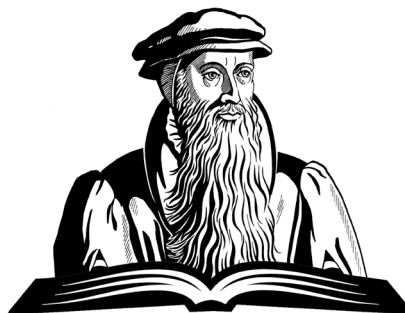
STUDY GUIDE

Module 7:

**ESCHATOLOGY—
THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS**

Lecture 9:

THE DOCTRINE OF HELL



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
7. The Second Coming and the Resurrection
8. The Doctrine of the Judgment
- 9. The Doctrine of Hell**
10. The Doctrine of Heaven

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Eschatology—The Doctrine of Last Things

Lecture 9:

The Doctrine of Hell

Introduction

No doctrine is more unpopular today than the biblical teaching concerning the everlasting punishment of unbelievers. Even evangelical churches are reluctant to proclaim that the unconverted will be cast into the lake of fire to be tormented forever. But actually, no one speaks more about Hell than our Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is concerned to warn men and women to flee from the wrath to come. He himself suffered Hell on the cross to deliver us from the Hell to come. He leaves us in no doubt that rejecting his gospel and his saving work at Calvary will not only result on you missing heaven, but it will also cause you to be thrown into Hell—a Hell of everlasting misery.

Theme: *The Doctrine of Hell.*

I. The Modern Influences

1. Beliefs of the Universal Fatherhood of God and Universalism.
 - a. Every human being is a child of God.
 - b. All human beings will eventually be saved.
 - c. Was generally recognized until the late 19th century.
2. The biblical teachings of the Fatherhood of God.
 - a. How to correctly understand Acts 17:28.
 - b. The biblical Fatherhood of God and the doctrine of adoption.
 - c. Unbelievers are not the children of God.
3. Beliefs of Postmodernism.
 - a. Everyone has their own truth.
 - b. Opposes objective truth.

- c. There are many ways to salvation.
- d. The biblical truth of only one way of salvation is considered a hate crime.
- e. Strongly promoted by Western universities, schools, media and government.
- f. The Judgment Day or punishment for sin is extremely unpopular in churches.

Questions:

1. What were the main teaching of the Universal Fatherhood of God?

2. What is the main teaching of Universalism? Does Acts 17:28 support this belief?

3. What is the biblical teaching about the Fatherhood of God? How can a sinner enter into that relationship, according to Scripture?

4. What are the main views of Postmodernism? What effect has Postmodernism had on the world today?

5. How has Postmodernism affected Christian churches? Because of this, what main biblical doctrines are no longer taught in many churches?

II. Hell, According to the Scriptures

1. Biblical words for Hell.
 - a. Sheol or Gehenna in the Old Testament.
 - b. Hades in the New Testament.
2. Hell taught in the Old Testament.
 - a. This life is not the end.
 - b. There is a Judgment Day.
 - c. There is a heaven and hell.
 - d. Those who die in sin go to a place of conscious punishment.
3. Hell in the New Testament.
 - a. No one in the Bible speaks more about Hell than our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b. Jesus taught that there are two destinations in eternity; two states.
 - c. The apostles' teachings about Hell.

Questions

1. What are the two main words used in the Old Testament for “hell”? What is the meaning of each word?

2. What word is used in the New Testament for “Hell”?

3. What does the Old Testament tell us about Hell? Please cite biblical references.

4. What does the Lord Jesus Christ teach about Hell? In what ways does he describe it?

5. What are the teachings of the apostles about Hell? How do their teachings compare to what Jesus taught?

III. Modern Errors Opposing Hell

1. Modern errors have raised doubts about Hell.
 - a. Higher criticism of the inspiration and authority of Scripture.
 - b. Liberalism undermined the penal substitutionary atonement.
3. Two forms of Universalism, that everyone will be saved.
 - a. Pluralistic Universalism.
 - 1) There are many different roads that lead to God.
 - 2) So all religions are accepted.
 - b. Christian Universalism.
 - 1) Salvation is in Christ alone, but Christ died for the sins of the whole world.
 - 2) At the end of the world, all people will be saved.
 - 3) Some say there is a purgatory where unbelievers will be purified.
 - 4) Some say the unconverted will get a second chance to accept Christ after death.

Questions:

1. What are the two types of Universalism? What are the implications of each of them?
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IV. Conditional Immortality

1. Only true Christians will live forever, have everlasting life.

Objection #1: A loving God would not punish people for eternity.

Answer: This forgets that God is not simply love; he is also truth, justice, wisdom, and holiness.

Objection #2: It would be unjust for God to punish someone in hell for eternity.

Answer 1: Sin against an infinitely good God demands everlasting punishment.

Answer 2: Sinners in Hell continue to blaspheme God, so deserve further punishment.

2. Different forms of Conditional Immortality, or Annihilation.

a. All human beings are annihilated at death and only the saved are raised at the resurrection.

1) Jehovah's Witnesses.

2) Socinians.

b. The conscious punishment of the wicked after death is temporary, then they are annihilated.

1) Many modern evangelicals

c. Only God is immortal.

d. Eternal life is only something which believers attain.

3. Scriptural answers to Conditional Immortality.

a. Hell is eternal, conscious suffering.

b. Hell is a place where the fire is never quenched, so it needs something to burn forever.

c. If heaven is everlasting, then Hell must be everlasting punishment by God.

d. There is no second chance; none who go to Hell ever get out.

e. God will be glorified in the destruction of the wicked, just as he is glorified in the salvation of the saints.

Questions:

1. What is Conditional Immortality?

2. *"How could a loving God punish people endlessly?"* Please answer this objection with Scriptural references.

3. *"It would be unjust for God to punish someone for eternity in Hell."* Please answer this objection with Scriptural references.

4. Some say all human beings are annihilated at death, and only the saved are raised at the resurrection. Please refute this from Scripture.

5. What are other forms of Conditional Immortality? How does Scripture show these to be wrong teachings?

6. What are some of the false religious groups that are influenced by Conditional Immortality? What do they believe about Hell?

7. What is the significance of the doctrine of Hell? Why is it necessary? How is the doctrine of Hell applied to Christian believers?

V. Self-Reflection

The doctrine of Hell is not a light thing, but actually it is a vital doctrine that should not be ignored. Correctly teaching this doctrine is edifying for Christians. What are the implication of this doctrine for your own Christian life? Meditating on the fact that Christ himself suffered Hell on the cross in your place should comfort you greatly, knowing that you will not suffer Hell yourself.
