

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

Video Lecture Series

by Rev. William Macleod

STUDY GUIDE

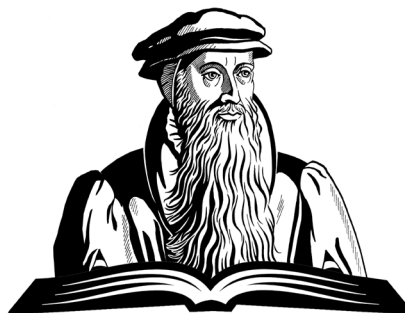
Module 7:

ESCHATOLOGY—

THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

Lecture 10:

THE DOCTRINE OF HEAVEN



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
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8. The Doctrine of the Judgment
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- 10. The Doctrine of Heaven**

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Module 7:

Eschatology—The Doctrine of Last Things

Lecture 10:

The Doctrine of Heaven

Introduction

The Great Judge will say to the unbelievers, “Depart from me, ye cursed.” But he says to those who trust in him, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”—Matthew 25, verse 34. How awful is that word “depart”—depart forever. But how wonderful is that word “come”—come and dwell with me forever. Jesus had comforted his disciples as he was about to leave them the night before he was crucified. He said: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also”—John 14, verses 1 to 3.

Theme: *The Doctrine of Heaven.*

I. What Heaven Will Be Like

1. Images and symbols about Heaven are graphic and metaphorical terms.
 - a. Very different from our present state.
 - b. A very good place.
 - c. We will glorify and enjoy God.
2. Heaven is a place distinct from this world.
 - a. It is a special location.
 - b. Enoch and Elijah are there.
 - c. The Lord Jesus Christ is there.
 - d. God is omnipresent, but his presence is especially there.
 - e. Angels are there.

- f. The souls of saints who have died are there.
- 3. John's vision of heaven, Revelation 21:2.
 - a. The heavens and earth will be regenerated, made new.
 - b. There will be a renewed garden of Eden without sin or Satan.

Questions:

1. What two things does the Bible make use of when describing heaven to us? Should we take them literally?

2. Is heaven an actual, certain and distinct place? What do we know about heaven from the Scripture?

3. Who will inhabit heaven?

4. Revelation chapter 21 tells us about the new heaven and new earth; that the first heaven and earth are passed away. Will the present universe no longer exist? Or will it be renewed as the new heaven and new earth?

II. The Presence of God

- 1. The presence of God in the Old Testament.
 - a. The Tabernacle in the wilderness.

- b. The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night.
 - c. The Temple in Jerusalem.
 - c. God's presence at the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, separated by a veil.
2. The presence of God in the New Testament.
- a. The veil was torn down at Christ's crucifixion, and the Holy of Holies is open.
 - b. The saints have constant and enjoyable access to God.
3. At the last day, we shall be transformed into his likeness, and we shall see God.
- a. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face" (1 Corinthians 13:12).
 - b. "When he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).
4. We need God, we seek God, and in Heaven, we will fully and forever experience God.
- a. In this world, we grow spiritually cold, backslide, and God removes his presence.
 - b. In Heaven, we will dwell in God's presence forever, without any sin.
 - c. In Heaven, we will be fully satisfied in God.

Questions

1. How did God manifest his presence to his people in the Old Testament?

2. How is God's presence manifested to his people in the New Testament? What changed?

3. How will God's people enjoy his presence in Heaven? How is that different from the way we enjoy God's presence in the world today?

III. The New Jerusalem

1. Heaven is described as a city.
 - a. We will be in good company, millions of saints from every tribe and nation.
 - b. God's house has many mansions, many homes.
 - c. We will be with our Father and his family.
 - d. Described as a garden, the new Eden, a paradise of trees and flowers.
 - e. The river of the water of life proceeds from the throne of God and of the Lamb.
 - f. Christ is the very center of Paradise, and his presence makes Heaven to be heaven.
2. The former things are passed away, Revelation 21:4.
 - a. There is no suffering, no disability, no illness, no pain.
 - b. There is no sin there, therefore, no more curse, no death, no sorrow, no crying.
 - c. The devil is not there.
 - d. There is no night there, Revelation 21:5, "the Lamb is the light thereof."
 - e. There is no more sea.
 - f. Nothing that defiles, works abomination, or makes a lie.
 - g. There is no temple there.
3. The New Jerusalem is glorious.
 - a. A great city to house enumerable saints.
 - b. It is a holy city—nothing sinful will enter.
 - c. Only those washed in the blood of Christ, justified, and sanctified.
 - d. It is made up of most precious things: gold, jewels.
 - e. The 12 gates are pearls, facing all directions, welcoming all who receive the gospel.
 - f. The streets are gold.
 - g. The walls have 12 foundations, with the names of the twelve apostles.
 - h. The length, and breadth, and height of it are equal—twelve thousand furlongs.
 - 1) The number 12 is made up of: 3 for the Trinity, times 4 for the corners of the earth, times a thousand, to emphasize its greatness.

Questions:

1. What can we say about the company we will have in Heaven? How does this affect you?

2. How is Heaven described like a garden? How are we to understand the different metaphors used in Revelation 22, verses 1 and 2? What do they represent?

3. What is the reason that there will be no more suffering and death in Heaven? How is this significant?

4. What other worldly things will not be found in Heaven?

5. What does it mean that there will be no night in Heaven? What will be the source of light there?

6. What does it mean that there is no sea in Heaven? What special meaning does that have?

7. How should we understand that there is no temple in Heaven?

8. What is the glory of the New Jerusalem?

9. How do we see the Trinity in the measurements of the city?

IV. Other Issues About Heaven

1. We will know one another in Heaven.
 - a. The disciples recognized Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration.
 - b. The rich man recognized Lazarus and Abraham from his place in hell.
2. How we will see our loved ones who may be in hell.
 - a. The Judgment will demonstrated the wickedness of the wicked and the justice of God.
 - b. Our love for God will cause us to acquiesce to his judgment.
3. Our occupation in Heaven.
 - a. All will worship God.
 - b. God will decide what is best for us.
 - c. We will be occupied with discovering more and more of God.
4. Heaven is described as the marriage supper of the Lamb—Psalm 45, verses 14 and 15.
 - a. It will be feast of love for Christ forever.

Questions:

1. What makes us to believe that we will know each other in Heaven?

2. How will we think about our loved ones who were unbelievers when we see them in hell?

3. Will we have work to do in Heaven? What will it be like?

4. What are the implications of Heaven being described as the marriage supper of the Lamb?

V. Self-Reflection

What a haven of rest to enter Heaven, after having passed through the storms and tempests of this world, where pride, selfishness, envy, malice, scorn, contempt, contention, and vice are like waves of a restless ocean, always rolling; and we are often dashed about in violence and fury. In Heaven “they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Revelation 7:16–17). May the believer long earnestly for this eternal state of blessedness, where he shall see his Redeemer with his very eyes, and see no other, for Christ will be all-consuming for him.

—adapted from “Heaven is a World of Love,” in *Charity and Its Fruits*, by Jonathan Edwards.

We hope this last lecture about the doctrine of Heaven has been a blessing to your soul.
