

14. Eschatology in Paul's Letters

1. Purpose of the Lecture

- 1) To systematically understand the core eschatological themes in Paul's letters.
 - 2) To rightly grasp the biblical hope of the end times and the tension with present reality.
 - 3) To discern modern errors in eschatology (e.g., Dispensationalism, date-setting predictions).
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2. Key Concepts in Pauline Eschatology

1) The Tension of "Already and Not Yet"

- (1) God's kingdom has already begun through Christ but is not yet fully consummated (Rom 8:23, 1 Cor 15)
- (2) Believers are part of the new creation yet groan in hope while awaiting fulfillment

2) Resurrection and Parousia

- (1) Christ's resurrection is the first fruits of believers' resurrection (1 Cor 15:20–23)
- (2) At His return, the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thess 4:13–18)

3) Final Judgment

- (1) God's final judgment will distinguish the righteous from the wicked (Rom 2:5–11)
- (2) Salvation is by grace, but judgment is according to works (2 Cor 5:10)

4) Hope of Glory and Endurance

- (1) Present suffering is not worth comparing to the glory to come (Rom 8:18)
 - (2) Eschatology is not just future prediction, but a guide for present living
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3. Distinctives of Pauline Eschatology

1) Christ-Centered Eschatology

- (1) Eschatology is interpreted through Christ

(2) Centered on Christ's resurrection, return, judgment, and glory

Ethical Urgency

(3) Urges holy and sober living in light of the end (1 Thess 5:1–11)

2) Community-Oriented Hope

Emphasizes communal endurance, hope, and encouragement in the church

4. Contemporary Application

1) Critique of date-setting, dispensationalist, and mystical eschatologies

2) The end is not to be feared but longed for

3) Eschatology empowers present-day faithfulness and holiness