

## **ANTHROPOLOGY AND HAMARTIOLOGY:**

### ***The Destiny of Man***

A Study for Bible Institute of Gulf Coast Baptist Church - Spring 2026

Adam's disobedience in the garden resulted in God instituting curses upon the serpent, Eve, and Adam for ushering sin and death into the created universe. Following these declarations He ordered cherubim to stand guard at the entrance of the Garden of Eden so that none could venture in and partake of the tree of life. It seems that eating of the fruit of this tree would have allowed the first couple and their descendants to "*live for ever*" (Genesis 3:22-23). God did not intend for man to live forever in the newly fallen world. Physical death would be the end man's time on earth, and whether their life would last twenty, fifty, or even by chance eighty years their time would be brief. As the psalmist wrote, "*the days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, an we fly away.*" (Psalm 90:10). This reality has tormented fallen man since they were evicted from Eden because it leads to the inevitable question of, "what's after this?". God's plans for man extend beyond the here and now. His plans extend into an eternity that all men will experience in one of two locations, heaven or hell.

Whether an individual eventually experiences eternity in heaven or hell depends upon whether they believe a specific promise of God in this life. This promise is also called the Gospel or the "good news". During different periods of time in human history, God has related to various groups of people in different ways. These periods of time are often known as dispensations. In each of these dispensations God has provided individuals with a promise to believe in in order to be forgiven of the sin they inherited as Adam's offspring. While God progressively changed the promise during human history, man's salvation has always been based upon the crosswork and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is Christ's finished work that has provided mankind the means by which he can be forgiven and made right with God once again but this does not mean that death and judgment have ended. Each dispensation has ended in a judgment due to failure to comply with God's rules for living in that period of time and mankind awaits future judgement as well.

### **BELIEVERS**

Each believer in Jesus Christ during the dispensation of Grace will be ushered into the presence of God by one of two means, physical death or the Rapture. The moment a believer's spirit is separated from their body by death, whether it be from cancer, heart attack, car accident, etc., they will immediately find themselves in the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:8-10). But some believers will still be alive on earth when this dispensation ends in failure at which time "God will 'snatch' his saints at the end of the dispensation of grace as a judgement for failure to live according to the rule of life. This judgement is gracious because it will remove the believer from a world that will face the judgement of God (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18)"<sup>1</sup> This event is

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas, Steve. Notes. Anthropology and Hamartiology: The Destiny of Man. 2022;

commonly referred to as the Rapture. This “snatching up” of saints comes from the Greek word *harpazo*. At this event, the bodies of those who had previously died in Christ will ascend to heaven momentarily before those saints still alive on earth at the end of the dispensation of Grace.

Although the Bible is not specific about the timeframe, the Rapture will be followed by the Bema Seat judgement. It seems that those who comprise the Church will be the only believers present before Christ at this time. Christ will NOT be judging sin at this time, His crosswork guaranteed that those believing on Him would never experience condemnation for sin (Romans 5:18 6:10, 8:3). John quoted Christ as saying that those who believe on Him, “...*hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.*” (John 5:24) So if sins are not being judged at the Bema Seat what will Christ be presiding over?

Paul described this event to the Corinthians, “*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hat done, whether it be good or bad.*” (2 Corinthians 5:8-10). The word translated “good” in this sentence refers to those things that are inherently good while “bad” refers to those things that are lacking value or are worthless. Paul explained that the believers works would be evaluated or judged by Christ, not their previously forgiven sins.

Each individuals works will be judged consistent with Christ as the template, or in other words, how does one’s works match up in comparison to His works? There are two aspects of the believer’s works which will be evaluated at the Bema Seat (1 Corinthians 3:11-13). First, Christ will inspect believer’s motivations. Paul writes, “*Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God.*” (1 Corinthians 4:5). These “hidden things” and “counsels of the heart” refer to the inner workings of the heart. The inner part of man where and why he makes his decisions. In other words, Christ will piercing evaluation will reveal the true motivation behind their service to Him.

Secondly, the believer’s works will be judged depending on the source of their empowerment for service. Christ will evaluate whether individuals were reliant upon Him or their flesh for their service. Believers are often guilty of producing “good” works in the power of their flesh. The Corinthians were a busy Church but they relied on worldly wisdom, argumentation, and academia (1 Corinthians 1:17-21). They also divided allegiances between different religious leaders like Paul and Peter (1 Corinthians 1:12-13). These are examples of service that may “look good” to others but are not “inherently good”.

Believers will be rewarded for those acts that pass Christ’s evaluation while those that fail to qualify will be “burned”. Scripture refers to five crowns associated with the Bema Seat:

- I. The crown of righteousness - awarded to those loving the appearing of Christ (2 Timothy 4:8)
- II. The crown of life - awarded to those who overcome temptations (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10)
- III. The crown of rejoicing - awarded to those who lead someone to the Lord (1 Thessalonians 2:19)

- IV. The crown of glory - awarded to those who serve as shepherds (1 Peter 5:2)
- V. The incorruptible crown - awarded to those who experience victory in spiritual warfare (1 Corinthians 9:25)

## **THE TRIBULATION SURVIVORS**

Sometime after the Rapture ends the dispensation of Grace, the Tribulation will ensue. The Tribulation, also known as Jacob's Trouble and Daniel's Seventieth Week, is a seven year time period in which God will be pouring out His wrath upon the world as well as purging the nation of Israel of unbelieving Jews.

Paul states that at the end of this time period "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26). This means that only saved Jews will survive the horrible time period. The Jews who make it through the Tribulation will be provided entrance into the Millennial kingdom God had prepared for them. Daniel prophesied that Old Testament Jewish saints will be resurrected to enter this kingdom as well albeit in glorified bodies (Daniel 12:1-2).

There will also be a sizable group of Gentiles who make it through the Tribulation as well. These Gentiles will stand before Christ for judgement when He returns. This event is referred to as the Judgement of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:32). Christ will divide this group into two folds. The sheep are those Gentiles who demonstrated acts of compassion upon Christ's Jewish brethren in the midst of the Tribulation. The sheep are not saved by their works but their service to the persecuted Jews is out from a previously existing saving faith. These saved Gentiles will enter into Christ's millennial kingdom with Israel (Matthew 25:33-40). The goats are the remaining Gentiles who, because of a lack of faith, refused to offer assistance to the Jews during the Tribulation. Their end is to be cast into eternal fire (Matthew 25:41-16)

## **UNBELIEVERS**

Scripture states that there remains one more judgement at the end of the Millennial kingdom. Up to this point, all who have died in unbelief are sent to Hell when they die but this destination is only temporary awaiting the Great White Throne of Judgement. "The Great White Throne of Judgement is the place where all of the unbelieving world of mankind not previously receiving their eternal judgement will be judged...takes place following the execution of Satan's judgment."<sup>2</sup> At the conclusion of the Millennial kingdom Satan will be cast along with Hell into the Lake of fire and brimstone. (Revelation 20:7-10). Following this event, the lost of all-time will be brought before the Righteous Judge and judged as guilty and worthy of eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire.

## **ETERNITY**

### **I. Heaven**

- A. No more emotional or physical pain - Revelation 21:4
- B. No more deprivation - Revelation 7:16-17
- C. Cessation of labor - Revelation 14:13
- D. Incomparable glory - Romans 8:18

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

- E. Fulness of Joy - Psalm 16:11
- F. Unhindered, Perfect Fellowship with God - Revelation 21:3
- G. Likeness to the Glorified Son of God - 1 John 3:13

## **II. Hell and the Lake of Fire**

- A. Inextinguishable fire - Mark 9:43-48
- B. Fire and grinding teeth - Matthew 13:41-42
- C. Outer darkness - Matthew 8:12
- D. Blackness of darkness forever - Jude 1:13
- E. Separation from God - 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
- F. No relief from torment - Revelation 14:10-11