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**Doctoral Thesis**

**Eschatological Aspects in the Teaching of  
Post-Communist Romanian Pentecostalism  
(Summary)**

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The intention to explore the topic proposed in this paper stems from the desire to understand how Pentecostal eschatology influences the church (and also society), involving it in the fulfillment of God's ultimate plan for the world around us. Eschatological beliefs have matured alongside both biblical interpretation and Christian history. This development can be traced through studies that focus on the eschatological discourses of the Savior Jesus, as well as those of the apostles, the Church Fathers, the great Reformers, and contemporary studies that address Pentecostal eschatology.

The process reflects attempts to adapt to new conditions and challenges—sometimes leading to more focused visions, but at other times resulting in failures, dysfunctional forms, or unnecessary variations. It becomes a theological duty to better evaluate this development. The key element is the reception of these eschatological approaches, in order to discern which of their expressions are more useful in encouraging Christian faithfulness, in facing spiritual dilemmas, and in responding to individual and societal challenges.

The Christian response to the anxieties of contemporary humanity—as well as those of humanity in any era—has the risen Christ as its foundation and is contained in the hope of the glorious resurrection of all who belong to Christ. It will be a resurrection in the likeness of Christ Himself, that is, of the risen Christ: “Just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man” (1 Corinthians 15:49). Our resurrection will be an ecclesial event in relation to the Lord’s Parousia, when the number of the faithful will be completed (Revelation 6:11).

Jesus’ teaching about the future is simpler and deeper than many people realize. It is simple enough to be understood by every Christian, and deep enough to transform lives. Living in the light of His coming is what the early Christians did. We believe that our perspective and expectations regarding the future can decisively shape our priorities, decisions, and understanding of our mission.

Although it can be said that doctrinal disagreements have influenced the life of the Church more in its orthopraxy, perhaps few dilemmas have remained as visible, consistent, and controversial on the stage over the past one hundred and eighty years as the Rapture of the Church.

## **1. Purpose of the Research**

The term *eschatology* comes from the Greek *eschaton* (“the last things”) and *logos* (“word” or “study”). Eschatology is the branch of theology concerned with the final events of history and

the ultimate destiny of creation: the end of history, the Second Coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, the Final Judgment, heaven and hell, as well as the full realization of God's plan. Far from being a marginal or purely speculative subject, eschatology holds a central place in understanding the Christian faith.

It has been observed that eschatology represents the climax of a rich narrative of creation and the redemption of the world, in which God, as the supreme agent, preserves and restores the world from the fall into sin and death. In other words, eschatology describes the goal toward which all of God's works converge, being closely connected to the history of salvation and His eternal plan. This analysis aims to highlight the purpose of eschatological research, the theological reasons why eschatology must be studied, its relationship with other systematic doctrines, the role of eschatology in understanding the divine plan of salvation, and its importance in shaping the Pentecostal Christian perspective on the future. Additionally, the contributions of key theologians who have influenced the development of Pentecostal Christian eschatological thought will also be mentioned.

Eschatology has been an unnecessarily divisive doctrinal topic. On one hand, certain denominations in specific historical periods have focused almost exclusively on eschatology, particularly on the interpretation of Old Testament prophecies. This occurred, for example, in the years following 1820. On the other hand, many Reformed churches have been concerned about this overemphasis; however, this often led to the neglect of eschatology altogether. In fact, some churches even forbade speculative study regarding end-times topics. Unfortunately, both Martin Luther and John Calvin refused to write commentaries on Revelation, considering it too mysterious a text. Clearly, both extremes are erroneous, and eschatology should be studied as thoroughly as any other area of theology, as it is a subject present in Scripture and thus must be taught. In fact, eschatology is important because it primarily focuses on the fulfillment, perfection, and consummation of God's plan. It explains the accomplishment of the divine plan and the glorious conclusion and victory of Christ's Kingdom. Neglecting this is a serious error. Jürgen Moltmann is right when he states that "Christianity is not only eschatology in the epilogue; it is hope both retrospectively and prospectively." It is, in its entirety, anticipation and progress, and thus it revolutionizes and transforms the present. "The eschatological is not an element of Christianity, but the medium of Christian faith as such," which means eschatology cannot be merely a part of

Christian doctrine. On the contrary, the eschatological perspective is a defining characteristic of all Christian preaching, of every Christian existence, and of the Church as a whole.

## **2. The Importance of This Study for the Researcher**

Why is eschatology important, and why should it be studied? There are numerous theological and practical reasons that justify the attention given to the "last things" in theology: It is an integral part of biblical revelation: the entire Bible has an eschatological character, oriented toward the fulfillment of God's promises. The Old Testament moves forward with the messianic hope of the "last days," which culminates in the first coming of Jesus Christ. The New Testament proclaims the inauguration of those times through His life, death, and Resurrection—though the fulfillment is not yet complete.

Christians thus live in the tension between the "already" and the "not yet." The Kingdom of God was inaugurated by Christ but will be fully consummated only at His second coming. Therefore, to study eschatology is to study the very epic thread of Scripture—from creation to new creation.

**It Crowns and Illuminates the Other Doctrines:** Eschatology is not an isolated doctrine but the crowning jewel of systematic theology, shedding light on all other doctrinal areas. As some theologians affirm, eschatology "is the crown of theology, as it answers the questions that every other doctrine raises." For example, without a final perspective, the doctrine of God (theology proper) lacks an answer to how God will be fully glorified in His creation; anthropology and hamartiology (the doctrines of humanity and sin) would not know how the destructive influence of sin will be ultimately eradicated; Christology would be incomplete without the final victory of Christ; soteriology would leave unresolved the issues of believers' perfection and glorification; and ecclesiology would lack a vision of the Church's destiny being fulfilled in eternal glory. Thus, the study of eschatology provides the framework in which all these pieces of the theological puzzle find their proper place and full meaning.

**It Provides the Context and Motivation for Christian Life and Mission:** Understanding God's plan concerning the end times gives believers a strong motivation for ethical living and active mission. Knowing that we live in the "last days," already inaugurated by Christ, the Church takes on the mission of bringing the Gospel to the ends of the earth, seeing this as part of God's plan to call all nations to salvation.

The imminence of Christ's return and the reality of His coming Kingdom shape how Christians live, serve, and prioritize their lives in the present. The expectation of judgment to come urges

Christians toward responsibility—it calls them to live in holiness, to proclaim the Gospel, and to serve with zeal, knowing that what they do in the present holds eternal value. The Apostle Peter, for instance, directly links the anticipation of the end with holy living, asking: “*Since all these things are to be dissolved, what kind of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness...?*” (2 Peter 3:11, KJV). Rightly understood, eschatology guards us against both indifference and panic. It offers meaning to our present efforts in the light of eternity.

**Eschatology Strengthens Hope and Brings Comfort:** One of the essential functions of eschatology is to fuel the hope of believers. In the midst of suffering, injustice, and the trials of this world, looking to the promise of the resurrection and eternal life becomes a source of comfort and strength. Only by having “a living hope in the resurrection,” can believers patiently endure hardships to the end, knowing that God will wipe away every tear and reward every sacrifice. Eschatology reminds us that evil and suffering are temporary, destined to be defeated, and that the ultimate destiny of the faithful is eternal joy in God’s presence.

**It Sets the Heart on Heaven and the Promised Future:** Practically speaking, the study of eschatology helps lift our eyes from passing things toward eternal realities. In a secularized world overly fixated on the present, eschatology keeps alive the longing for the “new heaven and new earth” (Revelation 21:1) and for full communion with Christ. Without this perspective, Christians risk becoming too absorbed in the goods and concerns of this present age, forgetting the “treasure in heaven.” Yet the ultimate truths about the resurrection, the Final Judgment, and the eternal Kingdom encourage us to “look beyond this world” and yearn for heaven. Eschatological hope produces confidence and joy—even in the face of death—because we know that death does not have the final word, but has been conquered through Christ.

Thus, eschatology shapes in us a vision that is both optimistic and realistic: history has meaning, and its end is a glorious one, determined by God.

In conclusion, eschatology must be studied because it is an integral part of Christian revelation, it crowns and completes the other doctrines, it motivates Christian living and service, offers hope in times of trial, and anchors our perspective on the future promised by God. Neglecting eschatology leaves a dangerous gap in preaching and theology, whereas a healthy approach brings balance and spiritual enthusiasm.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

To the casual observer, Pentecostal spirituality may seem obsessed with speaking in tongues or other charismatic phenomena. While these workings of the Holy Spirit have indeed been given a prominent place within the Pentecostal movement—as reflected in the theological writings on Pentecostal pneumatology—Pentecostal spirituality cannot be properly understood unless eschatology is placed at the heart of the movement’s theology and practice.

This thesis aims to explore early Pentecostal eschatology and to understand its role in shaping the spirituality and missionary motivations of the movement through a historical-theological investigation. At the same time, this work seeks to assess the evolution of Pentecostal eschatological reflection up to the present day. As such, this study traces eschatological antecedents, examines the convictions of early Pentecostal leaders, and reviews the movement’s initial publications and newsletters.

Beginning with the Old Testament, continuing through the Gospels and the apostles, passing through the Apostolic Fathers and the era of the Reformers, we arrive in the present time—ultimately concluding that eschatology is essential because the entire Bible is eschatological in nature. The Old Testament progresses with eschatological messianic hope and culminates in the first coming of Jesus. The “last days” promised in the Old Testament—when Yahweh comes to Israel and sends His Davidic messianic king, when Israel and the nations experience tribulation, resurrection, and the outpouring of the Spirit—are inaugurated in the life of Christ, His death, Resurrection, Ascension, and the giving of the Spirit at Pentecost. However, the New Testament reveals the hybrid nature of the last days: they are inaugurated at Christ’s first coming, but will not be consummated until His Second Coming. Thus, the New Testament also reflects the same expectation and is infused with a similar eschatological messianic hope—this time, anticipating His return with longing. As previously shown, while a morbid obsession with the details of the end times should be avoided, the omission of eschatology is even more dangerous—because it deprives the believer of the guidance and hope essential for a fulfilled Christian life.

## **Chapter 2: The Importance and Relevance of the Topic**

When we speak of Pentecostal eschatology, we are speaking of a theme that lies close to the heart of the Pentecostal movement. Pentecostalism emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, at a Bible school in Kansas and—most significantly, in terms of its transformation into a

global movement—at the Apostolic Faith Mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, under the leadership of William J. Seymour (1870), the son of former slaves.

Yet these humble beginnings stood in stark contrast to the vastness of the Pentecostal eschatological vision. Pentecostals longed for a new age of the Spirit in the last days before Christ's return—an era in which Christians would be baptized in the Spirit of God, granting them a heightened awareness of His presence, deeper unity, and greater power for mission, especially through “charismatic signs” (spiritual gifts) such as divine healing and speaking in tongues.

This doctrine of Spirit baptism—particularly as evidenced by speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4)—became the most controversial aspect of the movement within the broader Christian world. As a result, Pentecostalism was at times unfortunately labeled a “tongues movement.” However, Pentecostal Spirit baptism had less to do with a narrow concern about tongues and far more to do with devotion to Jesus as the coming and healing King. This devotion instilled in God's people a Kingdom-oriented mindset, empowering them for mission in anticipation of the age to come.

David William Faupel was the one who integrated the eschatological creed as a central theme of Pentecostal theology. The key for Faupel was the premillennial eschatological passion shared among various revivalist Christian communities, which became a unifying thread leading to the rise of the Pentecostal movement. For Pentecostals, the “former rain” of the Spirit came to signify the restoration of apostolic power (the power of Pentecost as the former rain), along with the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit. This “latter rain” of the Spirit, expected to fall in the period preceding Christ's return, shaped the movement's worldview and served to integrate the “full Gospel”—in its fourfold structure, as articulated by Dayton—into Pentecostal theology and practice.

According to Steven J. Land, Pentecostal spirituality can be considered apocalyptic in nature, based on its core characteristics, which recognize the disruptive and renewing work of the Spirit “in the last days” (Acts 2:17). However, these “last days” should not be understood exclusively in reference to the future. Rather, they refer to the current “dispensation”—the time between the First and Second Coming of Christ. In this period, the Church is—and always has been—a missionary fellowship of the end times, which, through the power of the Spirit, participates in God's redemptive work. It longs fervently for the manifestation of the Kingdom through acts of gratitude, compassion, and courage, and seeks to hasten the presence of the Kingdom through worship, prayer, and proclamation.

### Chapter 3: The Coming of Christ – Biblical Foundations

Throughout the history of the Church, the prophetic and eschatological writings of the Bible have often suffered from inadequate attention, perhaps more so than any other major theological subject. In recent times, however, there has been a growing interest within the Church concerning future and final events, as well as a renewed focus on what Scripture says about the end times and the Kingdom of God.

The people of Israel have always been oriented toward a mysterious future. Yet, their entire history and the progressive unfolding of its meaning are grounded in their personal relationship with God. History serves to clarify the meaning of the promises—this is true, for example, of the promise regarding the land. The hope of the Promised Land animated the people during the Exodus, its regaining after forty years of wandering, and again after periods of exile. Over time, this promise took on a more spiritual significance, pointing toward eschatological realities. Old Testament eschatological teaching crystallized gradually and reached its full development in the prophetic discourse. This evolutionary process can be closely traced by observing the specific eschatological and apocalyptic vocabulary used in each historical period represented in the books of the Old Testament, as well as the context in which this vocabulary appears.

The narrative of the fall into sin, found in the opening verses of Genesis chapter 3, is immediately followed—verse 15—by the promise of a future Redeemer: *"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel"* (Genesis 3:15).

To understand how the Kingdom of God was perceived by the Jewish contemporaries of Jesus, we must first trace the history of this concept within Judaism, beginning with the Old Testament and extending to the writings that were contemporary with the emergence of Christianity. God's promise of a new covenant is found in Jeremiah 31:31–34. This divine promise envisions a covenant rooted in a conscious and loving relationship between God and His people—one in which the law would be written on their hearts, and they would know the Lord personally.

The topic of Israel's restoration has been a central theme in New Testament scholarship since the early 1990.

Although Matthew's eschatology largely resembles that of Mark, there are at least two differences. On the one hand, we have Jesus referred to as the Son of Man in the context of the Final Judgment (13:41; 16:28; 25:31); on the other hand, we have the concept of judgment upon



Israel (19:28), which is vaguely mentioned in Mark. Mark initiates the descriptions about the end. Thus, beginning with chapter 13, the Gospel of Mark speaks of the end in realistic terms: it will be a time of trials and hardships.

The Gospel of Luke reveals an important aspect—namely, the combination of history and eschatology. As a result, many scholars have debated whether Luke is more of a historian than a theologian, or vice versa. In his historical and eschatological discourse, the evangelist speaks about the Parousia. The coming of the Son of Man at the end of time is a certainty, and people must prepare for His arrival. The fourth evangelist places great emphasis on realized eschatology. Very little is said about future eschatology (we have only the phrase: “the last days,” 6:39), mentioning only the Resurrection. John, like Matthew and Mark, associates Jesus’ death with judgment upon the world (12:31). Unlike the Synoptics, John sees Jesus already possessing authority (5:27); He is glorified and lifted up (3:14). Another detail: the apostle sees Jesus already judging (9:35–39; 12:30–34), and already granting eternal life (6:47); the bread from heaven (6:25–34); divine adoption (1:12), and even the resurrection (5:25), in the present.

This is a kind of bringing of the afterlife into this life (a thoroughly Johannine concept). Here and now, the sons of the Kingdom enjoy the blessings of the life to come. Through faith and discipleship, a person already tastes the heavenly banquet prepared for them after the return of Christ.

Eschatology is a vital issue in the Pauline writings and is also one of the most debated aspects of Pauline theology. Paul’s eschatology provides the background for many other essential topics that make up the core of his theology. Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, soteriology, and anthropology are all built upon the eschatological foundation of Paul's thought.

An understanding of Christian eschatology cannot overlook the significant contribution of patristic literature. The Church Fathers produced substantial theological works over several centuries. Generally, the period of the Church Fathers is considered to span from the 2nd to the 8th century. Patristic literature is studied today with interest not only in Faculties of Theology but also in those of Philology and Philosophy, as well as in institutions and associations dedicated to its research. The majority of the most extensive and substantial patristic writings date from the first four centuries of the patristic era. This literature includes theological treatises, polemical writings, hymns, works of church history, and illustrates a wide range of literary forms and genres—some written in prose, others in verse.

## Chapter 4: Eschatological Perspectives in Post-Communist Romanian Pentecostalism

Pentecostal eschatology has undergone significant transitions. Eschatology is neither protological (concerned solely with origins) nor merely final—it is *permanent*. An excessive focus on history prematurely resolves the anticipation of the radical newness of creation, while an exclusive focus on the future neglects the continuity of creation with the coming Kingdom.

In Pentecostal theology and worship, the anticipation of eschatological dawn—partially realized in the present—draws individuals and cosmic elements into a fully integrated and transformed manifestation of the Kingdom of God. The tribulation debate has taken a distinctive shape over the past two centuries, especially among American and British evangelicals, following a renewed interest in futuristic eschatology.

The pre-tribulational view of the Rapture refers to a “*supernatural removal of the Church from the world before the Great Tribulation (the 70th week of Daniel) begins.*” The foundation of the pre-tribulational position is essentially based on a literal interpretation of Scripture. The pre-tribulational perspective is premillennial, as both the amillennial and postmillennial viewpoints do not focus on a literal tribulation period or on an imminent, anytime return of Christ.

The mid-tribulational theory is more recent in origin than the pre-tribulational one. A notable supporter of this theory is Norman B. Harrison, who published the book *The End. Rethinking the Revelation* in 1941. His followers see this theory as a middle-ground position. According to mid-tribulationists, the Rapture of the Church will occur three and a half years after the beginning of the Tribulation period, right before the onset of the Great Tribulation.

Harrison believed that the wrath of God should be associated only with the Great Tribulation, and that this wrath would be triggered by the opening of judgment at the sounding of the seventh trumpet (Revelation 11). Therefore, mid-tribulationists hold that—according to their view—the Rapture will spare the Church from experiencing God's judgment.

Post-tribulationism originates from the futurist and premillennial eschatology of Christians in the pre-Nicene period. This eschatology appears to have been implicitly understood by the majority of the Ante-Nicene Fathers. It was believed that the Rapture—when this theme began to enter theological discussion—would take place at the same time as the return of Christ.

It is significant that the Ante-Nicene Fathers were all post-tribulationists. They unanimously held the view that the Great Tribulation would occur before the return of Christ, and that the Church

would go through this period of suffering prior to being gathered to the Lord the Second Coming. The pre-tribulational perspective on the Second Coming was virtually unknown before 1830.

## **Chapter 5: The Influence of Global Pentecostal Theology on Eschatology in Romanian Pentecostalism**

The Church of God organization has had a major influence both on Pentecostal theological thinking in Romania and on the establishment of the Pentecostal denomination in the country. The roots of Pentecostal faith are found in the Holiness revival movements that emerged in the latter half of the 19th century. In reality, the emphasis brought by Pentecostalism is simply an extension of earlier holiness concepts. Its adherents strongly affirm that Pentecostal and Holiness principles are inseparable, and they see themselves as distinct from other Holiness believers only through the additional spiritual experience they have received. The history of Pentecostal faith must necessarily begin with the history of the Holiness split.

The Church of God is the oldest of the Pentecostal groups. Its origins date back to 1886, when it began as a separatist group of believers practicing holiness. The Church of God's primacy among Pentecostal groups also reveals that it did not initially emerge as a Pentecostal body. In its first ten years, it was merely one among many Holiness groups that had begun to appear. However, the specific feature of the Church of God was its profession of Spirit baptism and glossolalia (speaking in tongues). Despite the persecutions that followed, the Pentecostal church grew steadily. The first national representative of this movement was Gheorghe Bradin, who would later be elected president of the Pentecostal community in Romania. Pavel Budeanu was ordained as a pastor in the Church of God in 1923, after which he was sent as a missionary to Romania the following year.

Formed in 1914, the Assemblies of God is one of the largest Pentecostal movements in the world and, from the beginning, placed strong emphasis on the Second Coming of Christ. However, in recent decades, a segment of theologians and professors within the Assemblies of God has begun to reexamine the theological foundations of the movement's eschatology. Many of the historical expressions of Pentecostal eschatology—particularly its long-standing relationship with dispensational premillennialism—are losing popularity within Pentecostal circles.

In the second half of the 19th century, the Protestant Church experienced a great revival through the rediscovery of the Holy Spirit and a renewed interest in the Second Coming of Jesus. This Pentecostal movement tended toward a more modern interpretation than that represented by

Budeanu and Bradin. For instance, they rejected the practice of foot washing, considering it unnecessary and irrelevant. They also permitted moderate alcohol consumption, in contrast to Romanian Pentecostals, who practiced foot washing at every Lord's Supper and categorically rejected the consumption of alcoholic beverages. The Assemblies of God's statement of faith regarding eschatology-or more specifically, the Rapture of the Church-affirms the following truths: the Second Coming of Jesus includes the Rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints, to reign on earth for one thousand years.

#### **Chapter 6: The Effect of Romanian Pentecostal Eschatology from the Author's Perspective**

The Pentecostal movement in Romania currently exhibits all possible nuances. From all three perspectives—historical, dogmatic, and practical—Romanian Pentecostalism can be viewed as a miniature version of global Pentecostalism. Thus, we also find what theologians refer to as "pre-Pentecostals"; in its primary sense, this term refers to members of several movements that existed before the 20th century, which can be considered forerunners of modern Pentecostals.

As is well known, Romanian Pentecostal eschatology represents a central component of both the doctrine and practice of churches in Romania, focusing on end-times events such as: the Second Coming, the Rapture of the Church, the Millennium, and the Final Judgment.

There are three trajectories regarding dispensational Pentecostal teachings, each identified by its stance on: a futurist or imminent apocalyptic eschatology, the millennial reign of Christ, and the identification of the Church in relation to the nation-state of Israel. These three dogmatic elements have also been developed in the Romanian context, though not necessarily in an academic fashion.

In Romania, the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement followed multiple directions. Several factions gained official recognition, beginning in 1945, when Romanian Pentecostals were reorganizing. Three factions received provisional recognition from the state:

1. The Apostolic Pentecostal Church of God;
2. A second group with the same name, to which were added the Christians Baptized with the Holy Spirit, who had separated in 1931 due to the practice of foot washing;
3. The Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. This last group appears to have evolved from a community founded in Bucharest in 1933 by Eugen Bodor, the leader of the Christians baptized with the Holy Spirit, which was taken over in 1934 by Ioan Danciu, leader of the Apostolic Pentecostal Church of God.

At the beginnings of the Pentecostal movement in Romania, eschatology was strongly influenced by dispensationalism, a theological perspective that divides history into distinct periods or "dispensations" and emphasizes a literal interpretation of biblical prophecy. This influence led to the adoption of a premillennial view, which holds that Christ will return before the establishment of a thousand-year reign of peace on earth. Additionally, the doctrine of pre-tribulational Rapture, according to which believers will be taken from the earth before a period of Great Tribulation, was integrated into Romanian Pentecostal teachings.

However, this concern-both pneumatological and eschatological-did not remain confined to private or ecclesial spaces. After the Revolution of December 1989, as happened in all confessions, the Pentecostal education system evolved... Thus, the Pentecostal Theological Seminary, which had been founded in 1976, became a four-year college at university level. Its name was changed in 1992 to the Pentecostal Theological Institute of Bucharest, and in 2008 it received full government accreditation as a higher education institution. In addition, many other Bible schools and general education institutions were established.

### **Research Conclusions**

The vision Pentecostalism proposes for the future of humanity and the cosmos is shaped entirely by eschatology. The Christian Pentecostal perspective on the future is one of confident hope, anchored in God's promises, in contrast to secular perspectives, which often swing between naive utopianism and apocalyptic despair. Through biblical revelation, believers know where history is headed: toward "*new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness dwells*" (2 Peter 3:13, NKJV). This certainty gives Christians a unique attitude toward the future.

Pentecostal eschatology offers a perspective:

- of hope and optimism, tempered by realism.

The Christian looks to the future not with fear, but with confident expectation—"*our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ*" (Titus 2:13).

No matter how dark the times may be, the faith that Christ will return in glory to renew all things sustains and inspires the Pentecostal believer offers inner stability. Yet this hope is not a fantasy—it is based on the historical reality of the risen Christ: because He rose and lives forever, those who follow Him "*have an inheritance that can never perish... kept in heaven*" (1 Peter 1:4). The future, from a Christian perspective, belongs to God, and therefore is viewed with holy optimism. At the same time, eschatological realism acknowledges that the world will go through tribulations until

the end (see Matthew 24; 2 Timothy 3:1). Thus, this is not a naïve optimism, but one that bears the cross.

- of responsibility in the present. Knowing that judgment is coming, the Christian is called to live in holiness and to faithfully steward the gifts and opportunities received (parable of the talents, Matthew 25). The fact that history will culminate before the throne of God gives eternal weight to every moral decision.

Also, the expectation of Christ's return does not lead to passivity, but to active engagement: we are not to "*sit and wait for the world to pass*", but to work with even greater zeal, knowing that "*our labor is not in vain in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 15:58) and that we desire to be found working when He comes.

- Perspective Toward Death and the Afterlife. Instead of uncertainty, the Christian has the clear promise of resurrection and eternal life.

This liberates believers from the existential fear of death: the future beyond the grave is not a dark unknown, but a meeting with the Lord. Through faith in the glorified body and the restoration of creation, Christians look to the material future of the cosmos with hope: God does not abandon the work of His hands-He transforms it.

This also provides motivation for caring for the world (ecology, social justice), knowing that the destiny of creation is restoration, not final destruction. Christians can therefore act in the present in alignment with this vision—for example, fighting evil and injustice as a foretaste of the perfect justice to come.

- And finally, the Christian eschatological perspective guards believers against extremist errors.

Throughout history, distorted visions of the future have led either to apocalyptic fanaticism (groups claiming to have calculated the date of the end or trying to usher in the Kingdom by their own means), or to secularism (a denial of any transcendent future, living as if God never intervenes). A sound eschatological theology-anchored in Scripture and in the tradition of the Church-provides the antidote to both extremes. It teaches us, as Augustine said, "*to always be always prepared, but do not cease from our daily work.*" In other words, we live with eternity in our hearts, but with our feet firmly on the ground, fully aware of our present responsibilities.

In conclusion, the importance of eschatology for the Christian perspective on the future is immense. Without eschatology, Christianity would lose its orientation toward the promised goal and would risk either becoming too accommodated to the present or falling prey to speculation. Through eschatology, the believer knows where they are headed and can exclaim, like the early Christians: “Maranatha!” (“Our Lord is coming!”). This cry of hope echoes through the ages and shapes the way believers envision the future-with trust in a God who is faithful to His plan, and with the determination to remain steadfast to the end.

The study of eschatology is not a curiosity-driven exercise about the future, but a theological and spiritual necessity. Through eschatology, Christians gain a deeper understanding of:

- God’s character (righteous and gracious-He is the One who brings both judgment and restoration),
- the mission of the Church in the world (as the people of hope, living between the “already” and the “not yet”),
- and they nurture a hope that gives meaning and strength to everyday life.

Properly integrated into faith, eschatology protects us from both extremes:

- pessimism (the fear that evil will triumph), and premature triumphalism (the illusion that heaven can be fully established now through human efforts). Instead, it calls us to vigilance, to responsibility, and to joyful anticipation. In the academic realm, eschatological research aims to formulate this hope coherently, to clarify the relationship between God’s promises and their fulfillment, and to harmonize the various scriptural passages into a unified vision. But beyond the scholarly endeavor, the ultimate purpose of eschatology is doxological and practical: to glorify God for His marvelous plan and to live in the present as citizens of the future heaven. Any confusion or error in eschatology has repercussions on the overall Christian worldview. For this reason, eschatology must be studied with humility, with Scripture in hand, and with eyes fixed on Christ, who is coming.

In the words of the apostle Paul:

*"May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance"* (2 Thessalonians 3:5) that active, hope-filled perseverance, awaiting fulfillment on the eschatological Day of our Lord. We conclude, then, by emphasizing that eschatology is not merely about the end of all things,

but about the very goal for which all things were made. It speaks of the beginning of eternity with God, for the redeemed. By studying it with seriousness and reverence, we align our understanding with God's intent revealed in Scripture, we strengthen our faith and hope, and we can joyfully cry out with the Church throughout the ages: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20).