This article explains why many Christians believe in a literal 1000 year reign of Christ on earth.

Over the past few weeks a man in my assembly has been teaching his class on what heaven, and in particular, the Millennial Reign of Christ will be like, according to the Scriptures. It's not something that would often be spoken on in the assemblies, or perhaps in most churches. Nevertheless it is an extremely interesting topic, and seeing I have articles about the Rapture and the Antichrist, perhaps it would be good to discuss what exactly will take place during the Millennial Reign of Christ.

Heaven on Earth

There is a very common misconception in Christian circles that, when we get to God's heaven, we will be there for eternity. The Bible does not teach this. Throughout history both Jewish and Christian leaders have taught that God intended man's reign on this world to last for around 6000 years, after which there will be a 1000 year Sabbatical rest. There are some Christians that teach that there will be no Millennial Reign, that this is just symbolic. But there are a lot of Scriptures that seem to imply that the 1000 year Reign of Christ will be literal. In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John mentions the phrase, "thousand years", in six consecutive verses...

Revelation 20:2-8

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him **a thousand years**, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till **the thousand years** should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ **a thousand years**. But the rest of the dead lived not again until **the thousand years** were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him **a thousand years**. And when **the thousand years** are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

So much for the "thousand years" being mentioned only once in the Bible. If that was true those who allegorise this doctrine may have had a case for their beliefs. Other verses in the Bible corroborate this teaching in Revelation, that there will be a Millennial Reign of Christ upon the earth. Moses' words in Psalm 90:4 tell us that a thousand years seems so short to the Lord, that He thinks of it as we would think of the length of a day. Peter's epistle quotes this verse when talking about the Second Coming of Christ, and from this we can deduce that Peter most likely believed this world would also endure for 6000 years until the return of the Lord, after which Christ would reign for a thousand years.

2nd Peter 3:8-9
But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Using Moses' and Peter's equation of a 1000 years being like a day, we can examine many other Scriptures in the Bible which point us to the fact that Christ will return after 6000 years.

Exodus 19:11
And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and **sanctify them to day and to morrow** , and let them wash their clothes, And be ready against the third day: for **the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people** upon mount Sinai.

Notice the words, "sanctify them today and tomorrow". The Lord Jesus Christ sanctified His Church for 2000 years after His sacrifice on the cross for us. What will happen on the third day, or after the 2000 years has expired? Christ will come down from heaven in the sight of all men. The following verse is a prophecy concerning the rebirth of the nation of Israel...

Hosea 6:2
After two days will he revive us (Israel): in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

Notice it was 2000 years (roughly) before the nation of Israel was reborn. And what will happen on the third day? Israel will live in God's sight, as Christ will have returned to earth and will be reigning from Jerusalem. Again, the same interpretation still holds in the New Testament...

Matthew 17:1-3

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.

This time "six days" is mentioned, and speaks of the period from the Creation to the Second Coming of Christ. The transfiguration was a glimpse at Christ's coming glory in that day when He shall come to set up His kingdom on earth. Look what happens after His transfiguration. Moses and Elijah appear and talk with Him. Moses, which is figurative of the law, can be likened to Israel, and Elijah, who was taken to heaven in a chariot of fire, can be likened to the Church which will have been raptured before this event takes place. Again, a few other mentions of the "two days" in the New Testament...

Luke 13:31-32

The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee. And he said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

Luke 10:35

And on the morrow when he (the good Samaritan) departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.

In those days a penny was a day's wages. So we can see that the good Samaritan - a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ - only intended to be away from his sick friend for the maximum of two days, after which he would return. So we've established the fact that the Lord will return to earth very soon, firstly to redeem His Church, and secondly to judge the world and set up His kingdom. But what will that kingdom be like?

Christ as King

Christ's future reign on earth was prophesied by perhaps all the prophets of the Old Testament. His Second Coming is mentioned more times in the Bible than His first, which may be the reason why the Jewish nation has been so blind to the Lord Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. Few Jews could understand how their "reigning" Messiah could also be a "suffering" Servant. Sadly many Christians also fail to understand how their suffering Servant could be a reigning King. You need look at both these aspects of Christ's Person before you will gain a correct understanding of prophecy. The fact that Christ will reign from Jerusalem as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is clearly spelled out in Scripture. All the prophecies concerning Christ's birth mention it, which is perhaps why there was so much furore created when One claiming to be King of the Jews was born in Israel...

Micah 5:2
But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The above verse clearly teaches us that the One who would be born in Bethlehem, would be none other than the Lord God Himself. Again in the following verse in Isaiah, we have Christ's two characters in view - a "Son of man" born to Mary and Joseph, and a "Son of God" given as a sacrifice for sins to the human race.

Isaiah 9:6
For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Thus this verse proves that Jesus Christ was the Son of God before He was born in Bethlehem, and not as a result of His birth which so many false cults now teach. Note also, the titles "Everlasting Father" and "The Mighty God" also belong to this Messiah, proving without doubt He is fully Deity and not "a god" as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses would have us believe. The fact that Christ will reign as King is spelled out in some other verses...

Psalm 2:6-7

Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, **Thou art my Son;** this day have I begotten thee.

Luke 1:32-33

He (Jesus Christ) shall be great, and shall be called **the Son of the Highest:** and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

I like the difference between the angel's announcement of John the Baptist's birth, and that of our Lord. It was said of John, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord", Luke 1:15. But of our Lord it is said, "He shall be great". There is no-one above Him, He is the greatest. The doctrine that Jesus Christ is going to reign from Jerusalem as King of Kings is not a Christian invention, it is established in the Tanach (Old Testament) in the book of Daniel. Daniel's vision and that of John are virtually identical, and this proves that Jesus Christ truly is the Messiah and the Son of God.

Daniel 7:13

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

Revelation 5:6, 9

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb (Jesus Christ) as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

World conditions

So we've established that Jesus Christ will indeed reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years. But what will world conditions be like then? The Bible states that the conditions during the Millennial Reign of Christ will be much the same as they were before the flood.

After the tribulation period, the world will be in a terrible state. With a third of the world's vegetation having been burnt up (Revelation 8:7), a third part of sea life destroyed (Revelation 8:8) through a possible meteor impact in the Mediterranean Sea, not to mention global conflict, it may take a long time before the earth recovers from the ravages of sin. But recover it will, and a few verses in the Old Testament tell us how the land will be healed. I've often mentioned on the website how Israel is negotiating with the Jordanians on creating a canal from the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Aqaba to irrigate the land. It will never happen, for this construction work is scheduled to take place after Christ returns.

Zechariah 14:8-10

And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one. All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem: and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses.

Ezekiel chapter 47 gives a more detailed description of this prophecy of Zechariah. Interestingly, Ezekiel's prophecy bears remarkable similarity to that of John's vision in the book of Revelation. Again, the seeming duplication of this prophecy proves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The vision is the same and so the Revelator must be also. John states that these waters proceed from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Ezekiel 47:12

And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary: and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine.

Revelation 22:1-2

And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

The book of Isaiah also mentions idyllic conditions during the Millennial Reign of Christ. Chapters 11 and 65 deal with Christ's reign, and how even nature itself will enjoy a newfound peace through Isaiah's Prince of Peace. After the flood, God placed the fear of man upon all animals (Genesis 9:2). Now if you want to ride a horse it has to be broken, if you want to have a pet dog or cat it has to be trained, and if you want to company with an animal it has to be tamed. During the Millennial Reign of Christ, this fear will be removed...

Isaiah 11:6-9

The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

As before the flood, the lifespan of the average human being was around 900 years, so also will the lifespan of those tribulation saints who have come through the great tribulation. Isaiah states that longevity will be restored, apart from those who chose not to live under Christ's authority.

Isaiah 65:20

There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.

Imagine being called a child at 100 years old! But Isaiah states, the sinner being a hundred shall die as we do now. Remember, the wages of sin is still death. People will be still capable of sinning against God during the Millennium, even though the main source of sin, Satan, is locked up in the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:3). This leaves two other means of temptation,

the world and the flesh. The world will be brought under strict control. As the Lord states in Psalm 2, He will have to "rule them with a rod of iron". Why? To break the nations' stubbornness and correct their wickedness. As Zechariah 14 states, the representatives of all nations will be required to go up to Jerusalem year by year, to worship the Lord. Those that refuse to do so will be punished with no rain, and if they still refuse, they will be smitten with a plague.

You and I

So what will believers in the Lord Jesus Christ have to do during the Millennial Reign of Christ? As I said at the beginning, their are many misconceptions of heaven, and unfortunately continue to be propagated by the media. Heaven is not made of clouds, and angels do not sit around playing harps all day. Many people have this view that heaven is boring, and wonder what will be able to occupy our minds for the rest of eternity. We are taught in the Scriptures that when Moses was given the instructions for building the Tabernacle, it was to be fashioned after a pattern of things already in heaven itself (Hebrews 9:23). And as we have seen in the book of Revelation, trees are mentioned, a river, and many other things which we would recognize down here on earth. So perhaps things on earth may be fashioned by God after things that He has already created in heaven. No-one would suggest for one minute that earth is boring, the earth still retains a fantastic amount of beauty for having sustained the ravages of sin for over 6000 years. So imagine what Heaven, which is still as God originally intended it to be, must be like!

But in the meantime, the Bible states that believers will have a big part to play in the administration of Christ's kingdom upon earth. Some Christians have stated that we will have no part to play in the Millennial Reign of Christ, that Christ will rule from Jerusalem, and we will be up in heaven somewhere attending to heavenly business. This is not taught in Scripture. The book of Daniel states that the saints shall possess the kingdom after Christ returns (Daniel 7:18). The book of Revelation states that the song of the redeemed is, that Christ has made us "kings and priests: and we shall reign on earth", Revelation 5:10. But what perhaps gives the most detail on our role in the Millennium, is the parable of the talents in the New Testament.

Luke 19:15-18
And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because

thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.

The Lord Jesus Himself spoke this parable to His disciples because they believed the kingdom of God would immediately appear. They didn't understand that Christ had to suffer, die on the cross, would be resurrected and return to heaven, and only after 2000 years would He come back to set up His kingdom. We now understand this through hindsight and the Holy Spirit revealing to us the truth. Each servant in the parable was delegated responsibility over his master's goods when He left to procure the kingdom. When the lord returned, he rewarded those faithful servants by giving them responsibility over cities in the new kingdom he had acquired. Likewise, when Christ returns, He will delegate the responsibility of running His kingdom to those who have been faithful to Him on this earth.

Revelation 3:21
To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Revelation 20:4
And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Sitting on His throne doesn't mean we will get to sit on the Lord's throne and pretend to be important. It means we will be given official responsibility of ruling with Christ in His kingdom. What we are doing now for God is preparation work for what we will be doing for the Lord during the Millennial Reign of Christ. I've often wondered if the Lord would have enough cities to give to all those who have been faithful to Him on this earth. I thought, maybe I would be ruling over a caravan or something very small, if many people have been more faithful than I. But if you think about it, look at how many people it takes to run a government. It takes hundreds, perhaps thousand of people just to run the UK government, and there are a lot of different jobs to be done. There's a few dozen members needed to make up a cabinet, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Home Secretary, the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary, etc. Not to mention the Civil Service and Judges and Magistrates that administer the laws throughout the country. Although Christ will be reigning on earth, I think perhaps His servants will have special jobs to do in the daily administration of His

kingdom. Perhaps administering law, looking after the environment, looking after people, administering foreign governments (remember nation states will still exist). Who knows, perhaps for me it will be taking Sunday Schools, after all God's Word will still exist, and it has been said that it will take an eternity just to explore the unsearchable riches of Christ, in who He is, and what He has done on the cross through His unfathomable love for us.

So as we have seen, heaven (on earth) is certainly not a boring place, and there will be lots to do. There is much more could be mentioned than what I have written here. What is most important is, will you be there? Jesus Christ created you. He loved you so much He gave His life for you on the cross, so that your sins might be forgiven. He wants you to be with Him for the rest of eternity. Trust in Him for salvation today.

John 14:3
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.