

Premillennialism True or False?

Will Christ Reign For 1000 Years on Earth?

Bible Answers About Denominations

The doctrine of Premillennialism advocates that Jesus Christ will return to this earth and establish an earthly kingdom over which He will reign for 1000 years from Jerusalem. The doctrine rests primarily upon the misunderstanding and misapplication of Revelation 20:1-7. Will Christ reign upon earth? We respond with a resounding “no.” Our reasons follow:

First, God never promised an earthly reign for Christ! It is true that prophecies of the promised Messiah were interpreted by materialistic thinking Jews to mean that the Christ would rule the world upon David’s earthly throne (Jno. 6:14-15), but the Jews totally misunderstood the prophecies and the nature of the kingdom of the Messiah. This is obvious when we consider that all prophecies concerning the Messiah necessarily had to be fulfilled in Jesus (Lk. 24:44; 24:25-27). The inspired record affirms that all those prophecies were fulfilled in and by Him (“But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets, that His Christ should suffer, He has thus fulfilled” Acts 3:18 NAS). If this is true and Christ did not reign on earth, then it is apparent that an earthly reign was not promised. Add to this the declaration of Jesus that the destruction of Jerusalem, which was to take place during the lifetime of the generation then living when He spoke (Lk. 21:32), would constitute “days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled” (Lk. 21:22); you have the formula which demands that everything God promised in the Old Testament be fulfilled totally by 70 A.D. when Jerusalem was destroyed. If an earthly kingdom was contemplated according to Old Testament prophecy, then that kingdom had to be established no later than 70 A.D. Since an earthly reign of Christ was not in evidence by that date, it is apparent that none was intended. The fact is, God never promised an earthly reign!

Second, the Scriptures precluded an earthly reign! The Scriptures not only do not promise an earthly reign, they teach that Christ will not reign on the earth. Consider the following:

First, Jeremiah’s prophecy regarding Coniah (an abbreviation of “Jeconiah”) and his seed (Jer. 22:28-30) helps us to understand that Jesus would not reign on the earth. Jeremiah said no man of his seed should prosper sitting on David’s throne and ruling any more in Judah. Jesus Christ was of the fleshly seed of Coniah. The prophecy meant that even though Coniah had sons he would not have a successor on David’s throne; that Coniah would be the last man to occupy the fleshly throne of David. Someone is saying “what about Zedekiah, who was placed on the throne of Nebuchadnezzar?” He was the appointee of the king of Babylon, a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. Young Zedekiah was his prince and representative, but did not succeed to the earthly throne of David. Coniah was the last man to occupy the throne of David and David’s throne became extinct with Coniah—blotted out forever. Since Jesus Christ is a descendant of Coniah through Salathiel (Matt.

1:12, 16), then His (Christ) throne must therefore be somewhere other than Judah, or His kingdom would fail. This excludes an earthly reign of Christ from Jerusalem.

Second, Zechariah's prophecy concerning "The Branch." "And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD: Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech 6:12-13 KJV). Who is this man called "The Branch," who should sit, rule, and be priest all at one and the same time on his throne? Isaiah says very clearly, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isa 11:1 KJV). Paul wrote, "And again Isaiah says, "There shall come the root of Jesse, and He who arises to rule over the Gentiles, in Him shall the Gentiles hope" (Rom 15:12 NAS). Therefore, Jesus Christ fulfilled this prophecy; in that He was the one who was called the Branch. Therefore, Zechariah's prophecy is a prophecy concerning Christ on His throne. Zechariah affirms that Jesus would (a) build the temple (Eph. 2:19-20 says that He did); (b) that "he shall sit and rule on His throne" (Heb. 1:3, 8 says He now sits on His throne and reigns); (c) that " He shall be a priest on His throne" (Heb. 4:14 says that we have a great high priest in the heavens now); and Heb. 8:4 says that He could not be a priest on earth: that means since He is now a priest on His throne that His reign as King cannot be on the earth!

Third, the Jews readily admitted that Christ would be "The son of David" (Matt. 22:42). Therefore, Jesus presented them with a dilemma. "He said to them, "Then how does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I put Thine enemies beneath Thy feet"? "If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor did anyone dare from that day on to ask Him another question" (Matt 22:43-46 NAS cf. Psa. 110:1). The Jews could not answer because they did not understand the true nature of the kingdom. Yet, Peter explained its meaning on Pentecost (33 A.D.) when he said that Jesus was raised from the dead to sit on David's throne at the right hand of God where He rules as Lord and Christ (Acts 2:29-36). David, Jesus and Peter understood that the reign of Christ would be in heaven at God's right hand. Since Jesus is to reign at the right hand of God till the end ("then {comes} the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death" 1 Cor 15:24-26 NAS) there can be no earthly reign of Christ.

The wonderful climax of all of these passages is the second chapter of Acts—the day of Pentecost. Having preached the life, death, resurrection, ascension, coronation and kingship, throne and authority of Jesus Christ, Peter said, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ—this Jesus whom you crucified" (Acts 2:36 NAS). His hearers were pricked in their hearts and cried out, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Peter responded by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38 NAS). When one does this the Lord will add him to the kingdom/church over which He (Christ) now reigns (Acts 2:41, 47).

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