

Why Look to the Millennium?

By Nathan Warner

For many Believers, what follows this life is a bit hazy. Most Christians think that when they die, they go to Heaven and spend eternity there. Many Christian songs and hymns reinforce this idea. But this is not what God's Word says; He is not silent about what comes next. See "A Scriptural Primer for the Millennium" on page 12 to learn more about what God's Word says comes next for us.

There are also many Christians who think we should focus on practical teaching for Christian living and skip all the prophetic elements since "they don't really apply to me," and "it isn't really relevant to my life and my practical spiritual needs." But the Millennium IS practical to our daily lives.

Practical means "of or concerned with the actual doing or use of something rather than with theory and ideas" (Google Dictionary). The Millennium is not a purely spiritual thing; it is a physical thing. It is the practical Kingdom of Heaven's government on Earth. For us, the Millennium isn't retirement (an end of responsibility and ceasing our labors), but the beginning of the most exciting and fulfilling work we've ever done.

It is practical to our lives today, because we are to be living our lives practically for that day – we ought to be "doing" the things we do today for that day. Our lives ought to reflect the traits of that Kingdom. As Peter said, "*the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God!*" (2 Peter 3:10-12a) Because the things we work and live for in the world are going to be destroyed, we should be living our lives now for the eternal things of Christ's Kingdom. And our character and nature should be the character and nature of Christ's Kingdom. Is there anything in you today that will be unacceptable in the Millennium? Is there fruit of the Spirit missing or stunted in your life? Is there anything in you that is of this world and satan's government by sin? The answer is YES!

YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD. When you were born again, you were **Justified** by the blood of Jesus and transferred into His Kingdom as Sons of God. From that moment on, you are being **Sanctified** – set-apart for the Millennium, prepared for its responsibilities and glories. Part of that preparation is God's work in you to put to death the old man, the flesh, the old you that is still pulled this way and that by the kingdom of darkness.

You have been adopted out of the Kingdom of this world into the Kingdom of Christ, as a Child of God the Father. As His child, He has an inheritance for you. Do you know that He is preparing you NOW for your inheritance with all its responsibilities that will come in your glorification in Christ's Kingdom on earth? The Kingdom of Christ is practical to your life, NOW – it's not some wishy, washy fairytale of a far off land. "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time*" (1 Peter 1:3-5). He's caused us to be born-again! Why? To obtain an inheritance!

You see, the Millennium is part of our inheritance. Is an inheritance "impractical"? Well, you can't use it right now, but you're planning, preparing, and looking forward to the day when

the responsibility will fall to you. It is a part of you – a part of who you are. In the past, children were brought up for their inheritance, so they would be able to manage their portion of the estate that was their inheritance. As Believers, we also are not passive heirs: *“Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father”* (Galatians 4:1-2). So your life right now is not passive but part of the managerial upbringing of the Holy Spirit.

Note that we are not trying to make ourselves “worthy” of responsibility in Christ’s Kingdom by our good works here on earth. But we are to give ourselves over to His work in us to make us worthy of responsibility in His Kingdom. As an example, think of two sons who both want to please their father and be worthy in His sight. The first son looks for something he can DO to please his father. He grabs a saw and cuts the sofa in half because he heard his dad say how it would be nice to have two separate seats instead of one sofa. When his dad comes home, will he be pleased? Certainly not! A good son goes to his father and asks him what he can do for his father, giving himself up to his father’s will. This will please his father. So, go to our Father, *“seek His **face continually**”* (Psalm 105:4b) in prayer and His Word to you. Why? *“So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son”* (Colossians 1:9-13). We cannot walk worthy of Jesus, but we are to walk in a “manner” worthy of Him with a mindset to seek His face continually to please Him in everything we do.

God is regenerating you now spiritually – His Spirit’s managerial work in you is producing spiritual fruit, so that you can take part in Christ’s regeneration of earth. *“But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the **washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit**, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”* (Titus 3:4-7).

What happens if we do not walk in a manner worthy of Jesus and His Kingdom today? What if you spurn your inheritance and resist the Holy Spirit’s work in you? Well, when King Jesus returns, *“each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are”* (1 Cor. 3:13-17). God has given you works to do today in preparation for your responsibilities and honors in Christ’s Kingdom (not works for salvation).

With that in mind, Believer, our lives should be *“hastening the day of God”* (2 Peter 3:12a), obeying Jesus Who commanded us to make *“disciples of all nations...teaching them to observe all that I command you”* (Matt. 28:19b-20a), for the *“Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come”* (Matt. 24:14).

YOU ARE AN AMBASSADOR FOR CHRIST (2 Cor. 5:20) and His Kingdom. Every day since you became a Believer, you have been representing the Kingdom of Christ in your words

and deeds – you are representing the Millennium now in your life. When Jesus sent out the 70 disciples to preach the Gospel, He told His disciples to tell the people they would meet, “*The Kingdom of God has come near to you*” (Luke 10:9)! It had not arrived – it wasn’t here on this earth yet, but it had come near to them in the ministry and the work of those disciples. Your life as a Holy Spirit-filled Believer ought to testify to people that the Kingdom of God came near to them when you came near to them. Do people see a representative of Christ in you, or do they see the same sin in you that they are slaves to? I know there is sin in my life that does not represent the Kingdom – there is sin in your life that doesn’t represent the Kingdom. Sometimes we see it in ourselves and sometimes we make excuses for it, but the world sees it regardless. Are we good representatives? It can be easy for an ambassador to feel he is far away from accountability to his King in the foreign land where he is serving. He may do as he pleases. An ambassador’s behavior is a representation of his Kingdom and he will be held accountable.

YOU ARE THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. You are the Church betrothed to Christ! In Jewish marriage, the Betrothal period was a time of sanctification – the man and woman were setting themselves apart for one another and looking for and hastening the day of their union. They were putting aside all the things that they once were – all the character traits and behavior that couldn’t exist in their marriage – letting go of everything they once focused on and lived for as they are prepared to enter a new life together. People who say we shouldn’t bother looking to the Millennium would be like someone saying to a bride, “You shouldn’t waste your betrothal time looking forward to your marriage and preparing yourself for your husband!” The Bride of Christ spends every moment looking for and hastening Jesus’ return for her. It is her hope and part of who she is and how she lives her life! She’s living her life in a manner worthy of her Husband.

Every Believer has a promise that they will be united with Jesus when the period of their sanctification is up. It is a **GIVEN**, so we must be living diligently for that day – looking forward to it, living now for Him, earnestly desiring that day and hastening its arrival.

You have been set apart for Christ, Believer! This time of your Sanctification is when you are to be putting aside every weight and hindrance, every childish thing, to run the race of this life through the Holy Spirit’s work in you, in preparation for your life with Christ in His Kingdom (Hebrews 12:1)! Jesus is the ultimate example—He lived His life looking past the Cross to the Joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2)! Every Believer has a cross to bear as well (Matthew 16:24). Are you looking past your cross to the joy of your hope? The Millennium is our hope to be with Jesus. It gives us perspective in the temporal difficulties we face in life. It is **PRACTICAL** to you if you are His!