

Why is it so many professing Christians today seem to think that the reward of the saints will be to lie around on clouds and strum harps for all eternity?

Few of today's more than one billion professing followers of Jesus understand the true Gospel.

Most so-called Christians have been deluded into believing a false gospel about the person of Christ, while denying the actual message He brought to this earth nearly 2,000 years ago (II Cor. 11:4, 13-15, Gal. 1:6-9).

If today's Christianity really understood and taught the true Gospel — and the word *gospel* means “good news” — then this world would know that the Kingdom of God is soon to be established, literally, on this earth.

What this Feast pictures

The Feast of Tabernacles, or Feast of Ingathering, pictures the soon-coming, long-awaited, peaceful rule of the Messiah upon this earth for a prosperous, joyful 1,000 years.

Christ, the early apostles, Paul and the early Church kept and taught all of God's Holy Days, including this one. For solid proof from the Bible, see the special Bible study entitled “God's Holy Days in the New Testament,” beginning on page 17.

Edward Gibbon, in his work, *The Decline*



The Coming Millennium UTOPIA AT LAST

Jesus Christ is about to return to usher in, on earth, His 1,000-year reign of peace, happiness and prosperity. What does the Bible say about that glorious time?

By Raymond F. McNair

and Fall of the Roman Empire, clearly informs us that the early Christians did believe in Christ's literal rule on this earth for 1,000 years:

“The ancient and popular doctrine of the Millennium was intimately connected with the Second Coming of Christ. As the works of the creation had been finished in six days, their duration in their present state, according to a tradition which was attributed to the prophet Elijah, was fixed to 6,000 years.

“By the same analogy it was inferred that this long period of labor and contention, which was now almost elapsed, would be succeeded by a joyful Sabbath of a thousand years; and that Christ, with the triumphant band of the saints and the elect who had escaped death, or who had been miraculously revived, would reign upon earth till the time appointed for the last and general resurrection.”

Edward Gibbon states that this belief in the Millennium was the early Christians' common view:

“The assurance of such a Millennium was carefully inculcated by a succession of fathers from Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, who conversed with the immediate disciples of the apostles, down to Lactantius, who was preceptor to the son of Constantine.

“Though it might not be universally received, it [belief in the Millennium] appears to have been the reigning sentiment of the orthodox

Photos by Wil Berg

believers . . . But when the edifice of the church [false Christianity had now arisen] was almost completed, the temporary support [the belief in the Millennium] was laid aside.

“The doctrine of Christ’s [literal] reign upon earth was at first treated as a profound allegory, was considered by degrees as a doubtful and useless opinion and was at length rejected as the absurd invention of heresy and fanaticism.”

When the apostles passed from the scene, false teachers arose. These false teachers denied the true Gospel that Christ and His saints would literally reign upon this earth, and turned to the fable that Christians, after death, went to heaven for their reward (Matt. 7:15-23, 24:4-5, 11, 24, Acts 20:28-31, II Cor. 11:3-15).

The Feast of Tabernacles, the great fall harvest Festival, was a perfect type of the soon-coming great harvest of human lives upon this earth.

God’s Kingdom set up on earth

Jesus Christ will return to set up God’s Kingdom at the last moment before carnal man, under Satan’s sway, finally destroys himself (Matt. 24:21-22). If the Creator-Ruler of the universe didn’t intervene, not a single human being would be left alive on this earth.

The book of Revelation shows us what will happen when Christ returns to rule this world: “And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 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 [the Millennium] should be fulfilled” (Rev. 20:1-3).

One of Christ’s first acts at His Second Coming will be to bind Satan so that the devil can no longer deceive the world (Rev. 12:9).

Then what will happen?



“And I saw thrones, and they [the saints] sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years [the Millennium]. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection [the resurrection of the saints, who will rule with Jesus Christ during the Millennium]. 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 [on the earth] with him a thousand years” (Rev. 20:4-6).

Jesus promised that the saints — those who allow themselves to be ruled by God’s law, who overcome and who endure to the end — would be given power over the nations (Rev. 2:26-27, 3:21) and that they would reign with Him on the earth (Rev. 5:10, Dan. 7:27, 2:44).

Jesus will then be “Lord of lords, and King of kings” (Rev. 17:14). Zechariah prophesied that “the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one” (Zech. 14:9). Jesus’ headquarters will be in Jerusalem (Jer. 3:17), from which He and His saints will rule the world.

At last — utopia!

God’s Kingdom — God’s Fam-

ily — will rule this earth in true peace, prosperity and happiness. Let us notice some of the many scriptures that describe the coming wonderful world tomorrow.

With Satan bound — put in an abyss and restrained, for 1,000 years, from deceiving the nations — what will happen?

“He [Satan] who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing” (Isa. 14:6-7). Yes, the nations will break forth into singing when Satan is bound. The earth will finally know peace — no more strife or war.

God will then open, for the first time, the minds of all people to His truth (Isa. 25:7). God will begin to offer His Holy Spirit and salvation to mankind as a whole. Man’s very nature — his carnal, selfish orientation toward *getting* instead of *giving* — will be changed to God’s way of giving, serving, sharing, of having concern for others equal to or greater than concern for self (Jer. 31:31-34).

At last, God’s law will be written in the hearts and minds of all mankind, and crime, war, sickness and violence will vanish. Man will learn that obedience to God’s law pays big dividends.

Mankind will actually begin to seek God — will want to learn of and live by God’s way:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains . . . and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law [of God], and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

“And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against

nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isa. 2:2-4).

The prophet Micah adds this interesting detail: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Mic. 4:4).

Today people live in constant fear of violence and crime from fellowman; nations live in dread of the nuclear mushroom cloud. But in the wonderful world tomorrow, "None shall make them afraid!"

Man will not only be at peace with his fellowman, but with nature itself. God will change the animals' nature also:

"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 [together]; 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" (Isa. 11:6-9).

What a wonderful, utopian age is about to dawn on this planet!

A world of abundance

Revolutions will take place in agriculture and construction. Man will no longer be occupied with war and trying to harm his fellowman. Under the direction of Christ and the immortal rulers, man will be able to devote his energies to food production and rebuilding — properly — civilization. God will even change the weather and landscapes to promote man's physical prosperity (Isa. 30:23-25).

Isaiah 35 gives further details about the Messiah's reign: "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy

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and singing . . . Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water . . . And an highway shall be there, and a way . . . of holiness" (verses 1-2, 5-8).

No more will thousands starve to death daily, while millions of others suffer malnutrition because of lack of food (Amos 9:13-15).

What a time of prosperity! Man will have abundant reason to rejoice (Jer. 31:12-13, 30:19).

During the Millennium, God's people will show the nations of this earth how to build and how to restore, unlike today, when so many are bent on tearing down and destroying (Isa. 61:4).

Right religion and education

Under the training of Christ and God's immortal, spirit-born children, man will finally learn and practice God's way — the way to every abundant blessing. Religion and education will be inextricably intertwined (Isa. 30:20-21).

The immortal saints will be able to suddenly appear and rebuke anyone who goes the wrong way.

True religion will be enforced. Mankind will begin to keep all God's laws, which will include observing His Sabbaths and Holy Days (Isa. 66:23-24, Zech. 14:16-19). Individuals who rebel against Christ's rule will be dealt with swiftly and surely.

When man begins keeping God's Holy Days, including the Feast of Tabernacles, he will learn that God's festivals reveal God's great master plan.

In addition, there will be no more confusion of tongues — the whole earth will be united with one language (Zeph. 3:9).

And during the Millennium Jesus Christ — God Himself — will dwell on earth, at Jerusalem, with mankind (Isa. 33:17-20, Joel 3:20-21). Jerusalem will truly become the "City of Peace" during the Millennium.

The whole world will rejoice

This earth cannot know true, lasting peace (Isa. 59:8) until the "Prince of Peace" (Isa. 9:6-7) returns to this planet and establishes His world-ruling government.

We are commanded to rejoice during our Feast of Tabernacles celebrations because this great Feast of Ingathering pictures the soon-coming Kingdom of God, when Christ will do just that.

God's Word has much more to say about what God's Kingdom will be like than we have been able to cover in this article. If you would like to know more, please write for our free booklet, *The Wonderful World Tomorrow — What It Will Be Like*. Just use the request card in this issue or address your request to our office nearest you.

When God restores His law and His way of life — His divine government — to this war-weary earth, then we shall have unprecedented peace, happiness, abundant health and worldwide prosperity. This wonderful world tomorrow — the 1,000-year rule of the Kingdom of God — will be a time of supreme rejoicing for all nations.

What a world that will be! □