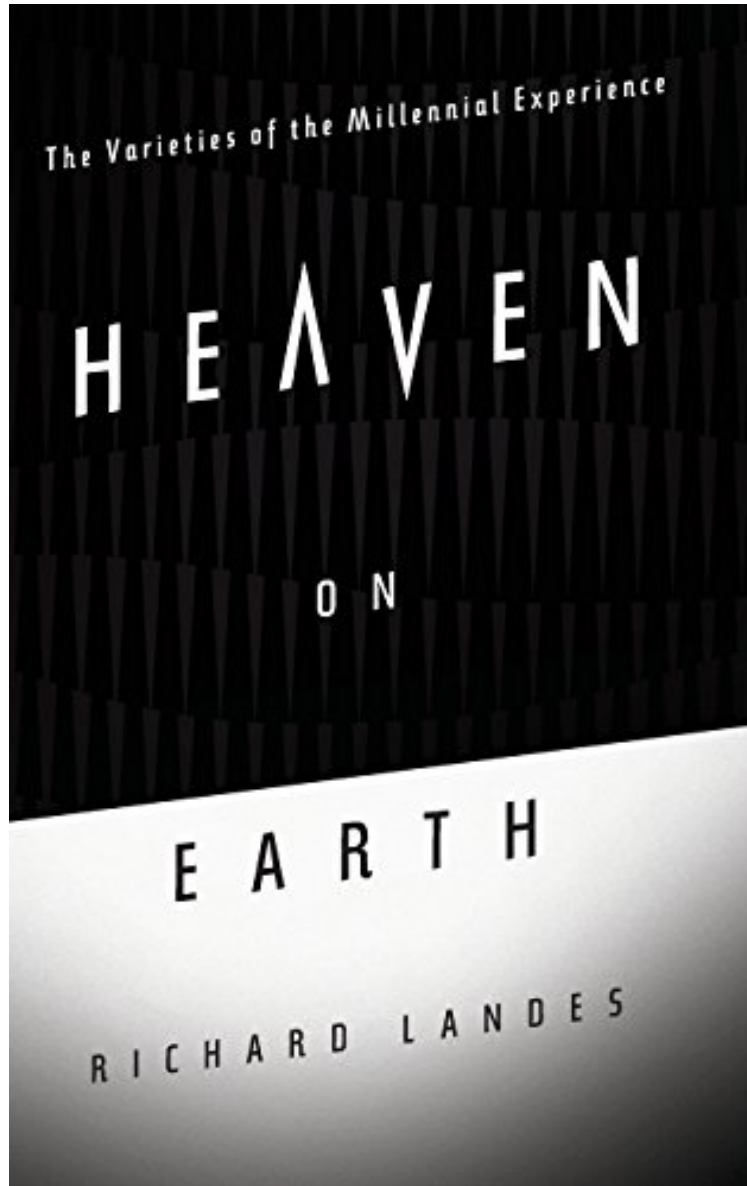


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Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience

Richard Landes

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Richard Landes : Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Heaven on Earth: The Varieties of the Millennial Experience:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Ties together and suggests a framework for understanding some of mankind's most inexplicable mass movements.By Alex F StopAn excellent study, from an unconventional viewpoint,

of times the masses are caught up in the expectation of Heaven on Earth finally here, and the pattern of disappointment and denial that inevitably follows. A pleasure to read and a great deal of food for thought about the future.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Apocalypse now? or the Strange Attractor at the End of History?By WILLIAM W. REYMONDThis is the seminal account of millenarianism - desire for the thousand years of perfection after the apocalyptic upheaval - as an enduring and universal manifestation of cultural, political, and psychological upheaval that transcends the usual descriptor of Judeo-Christian vision of the eschaton at the end of the world, written by one of the eminent scholars in the field. If you want a fresh understanding of just about any period in history or a better set of intellectual tools to grasp what is going across the political landscape today, this account is well worth the trouble to read. This isn't really an exciting read, but an accessible and scholarly pulling back of the curtain from some of history's most important events, you won't look at history in quite the same way again. One could argue that Prof. Landes' account is simply fitting his thesis to the curves of history - he sees millenarianism everywhere he looks - but I would argue that once you start looking at historical events in this way you may well find the boundaries between 'apocalyptic time' and ordinary time blurring and start asking yourself if millenarian thinking is one of the default failure modes of human psychology's drive to apprehend the future.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hard read but well worth it if you are interested in why societies can sometimes implodeBy Leo T. HoganI have read this book more than once. The author has taken on an ambitious subject. At times it is very hard going to read because of his use of words unfamiliar to the layman - eg: demotic and semiotic etc (or is it just my lack of education) - and metaphors (Roosters!) that I think may not really be necessary. However, for all these shortfalls I think the author is onto something profound about societies. It is because of this that I rate the book very highly. Read in conjunction with a book on the French Revolution, such as Simon Schama's 'Citizens' or Ruth Scurr's 'A fatal purity' is well worth it as these books tend to complement the arguments made by Landes in 'Heaven on Earth'.

Millennialists through the ages have looked forward to the apocalyptic moment that will radically transform society into heaven on earth. They have delivered withering critiques of their own civilizations and promised both the impending annihilation of the forces of evil and the advent of a perfect society. And all their promises have invariably failed. We tend, therefore, to dismiss these prophets of doom and salvation as crackpots and madmen, and not surprisingly historians of our secular era have tended to underestimate their impact on our modern world. Now, Richard Landes offers a lucid and ground-breaking analysis of this widely misunderstood phenomenon. This long-awaited study shows that many events typically regarded as secular--including the French Revolution, Marxism, Bolshevism, Nazism--not only contain key millennialist elements, but follow the apocalyptic curve of enthusiastic launch, disappointment and (often catastrophic) re-entry into "normal time." Indeed, as Landes examines the explicit millennialism behind such recent events as the emergence of Global Jihad since 1979, he challenges the common notion that modern history is largely driven by secular interests. By focusing on ten widely different case studies, none of which come from Judaism or Christianity, he shows that millennialism is not only a cultural universal, but also an extremely adaptive social phenomenon that persists across the modern and post-modern divides. At the same time, he also offers valuable insight into the social and psychological factors that drive such beliefs.Ranging from ancient Egypt to modern-day UFO cults and global Jihad, Heaven on Earth both delivers an eye-opening revisionist argument for the significance of millennialism throughout history and alerts the reader to the alarming spread of these ideologies in our world today.

"Millennial expressions are found throughout history and are all around us. As Richard Landes demonstrates, some have extremely serious consequences. This is an erudite and informative cross-cultural study of the characteristics and dynamics of the varieties of millennial movements. There is much to be learned from this volume. Particularly welcome are the treatments of the secular millennial thought of Marx, and the Communist millennial movement in Russia and its influence on German Nazi millennialism. Richard Landes's insightful analysis of millennial phenomena constitutes a major contribution to the study of history and current events."--Catherine Wessinger, Rev. H. James Yamauchi, S.J. Professor of the History of Religions, Loyola University New Orleans "A craggy edifice of a book, monumental in scope, solid in scholarship, exploring many crevices of the past that will disturb and provoke every serious reader. . . This book is about the urgent temperament of those who expect the grandest events of history and the cosmos to occur soon and suddenly, whether as a religious dnoeuement with the coming of the Last Days or as a final social solution to solve the human predicament forever. Through a judicious collection of cases (including radical shifts of belief in Antiquity, cargo cults, and UFO religions), Landes demonstrates just how significant the millenarian factor is in history, and admonishes that this element has been paradoxically downplayed by historians (who often do not even want to understand it)." --Garry W. Trompf, Emeritus Professor in the History of Ideas and Adjunct Professor in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Sydney "A significant contribution...succeeds in both analyzing past catastrophic millennialist movements and predicting what the future may hold." - Library Journal "A large and impressive book that shows a vast learning." -Kenneth Minogue, Wall Street Journal "A superb new book." -Bret Stephens, Wall Street Journal "In Heaven on Earth, Richard Landes redresses our historiographical blind eye towards

manifestly irrational social movements."--Daivis P. Goldman"Landes, an expert in medieval religion, presents arguments that will be controversial but are also largely convincing."--CHOICE"In his taxonomy of millennial ideas and movements over the course of history, Landes ascribes a very important role to Judaism. Heaven on Earth concludes with an urgent reminder of the danger posed by contemporary millennialism to the Jews."--Jewish Ideas Daily"The research is vast and deep, discovering meanings that one might have overlooked, had one not the impulse to upset convention.a work of enormous erudition and an imparter of knowledge and insight."--The Journal of Interdisciplinary HistoryI found Landes' attention to detail and persuasive argumentation on the parallels between these disparate movements one of the outstanding merits of the volume. The depth of his research is indeed impressive, as is his ability to create a narrative that is truly academic and interdisciplinary, as well as a pleasant read."--Nova Religio About the AuthorRichard Landes is Associate Professor of History and directed the Center for Millennial Studies at Boston University. He is the author of several books, and editor of *The Apocalyptic Year 1000* and the *Encyclopedia of Millennialism and Millennial Movements*.