

"...on earth as it is in heaven"?

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The contemporary relevance of the theme "on earth as it is in heaven" for so-called political theology is illustrated by means of three different approaches, unrelated to one another and all three controversial and contested.

In a first section, the work on millennialism and apocalypticism by the historian from Boston, Richard Landes, *Heaven on Earth. The Varieties of the Millennial Experience* is used to demonstrate the claim that apocalypticism is a trans-cultural phenomenon, also at home outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, with important political implications today.

In a second section, the work on *Occidental Eschatology* and on *The Political Theology of Paul* by Jacob Taubes is used to demonstrate the claim that Judeo-Christian eschatological thought deeply influenced the Western mind, but that the original eschatological and apocalyptic understandings have been replaced, when earlier notions of heaven were lost – issues that are again relevant today in the resurgence of political theology.

In a third section, drawing on recent South African experiences, the life and work of the South African theologian and political activist Allan Boesak is used to demonstrate the continuing political relevance of eschatological motifs in real-life political struggles.

Although unrelated, these three examples together serve as reminder that language of heaven, not only in spatial sense but also in historical sense may have very concrete moral and political consequences.