Sermon Series: Things to Come
Sermon Title: The Millennial Kingdom

Text: Revelation 20:1-6 -- Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while. 4 Then I saw thrones, and seated on them were those to whom the authority to judge was committed. Also, I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. 5 The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection! Over such the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years.

Opening: Niccolò Machiavelli was a Renaissance era philosopher, politician, and writer. His writings greatly influenced modern political science. Machiavelli believed that to be effective, political leaders needed to be ruthless and tyrannical, not empathetic and just. His book, *The Prince*, is a short manual of advice for princes on how not to finish last. And the answer was never to be overly devoted to acting nicely. and to know how to borrow every single trick employed by the most dastardly, unscrupulous and nastiest people who have ever lived. Machiavelli knew where our counter-productive obsession with acting nicely originated from: the West was brought up on the Christian story of Jesus of Nazareth. (He was) the very nice man from Galilee who always treated people well. But Machiavelli pointed out an inconvenient detail to this sentimental tale of the triumph of goodness through meekness. From a practical perspective, Jesus' life was an outright disaster. This gentle soul was trampled upon and humiliated, disregarded and mocked. Judged in his lifetime and outside of any divine assistance, Machiavelli referred to Jesus as one of history's greatest losers. **What he (and so many others) failed to take into account is that the gentle Lamb becomes a Lion. After the seeming "defeat" of the Cross, our resurrected Lord will return in great power and glory to reign over the earth as the Lion of the Tribe of Judah** (**Revelation 5:5**).

This morning, we're in our sixth message in the series I've been calling, "**Things to Come.**" So far, we've looked at (**1**) **the four signs of Christ's coming** (Deception,

Disputes, Devastation and Discrimination), (2) **what happens when we die physically before the Lord returns** (unbelievers go to Hell and the souls of believers go to be with the Lord), (3) **the rapture** (I hold to the pre-trib view because the Holy Spirit is removed and Scripture teaches that Christians are not objects of God's wrath), (4) **the time of tribulation** (the judgments of God are poured out on unbelievers for a period of seven years), and (5) **the second coming of Christ** (when He will reclaim the world for God by decisively and completely conquering His enemies so that only believers are left). Immediately following our Lord's return to earth, He will establish His kingdom rule on earth. This is known as the MILLENNIAL KINGDOM.

Now, to be fair to others, there are actually three views of the millennial kingdom that Christians support. (1) **Postmillennialism** – ***This is the view that the tribulation and the millennial kingdom happen during the church age which began at Pentecost*** (**Acts 2**). The tribulation comes first and is eventually replaced by the rule of Christ ***in the hearts*** of the majority of people on the earth as people from every tribe, tongue, language and nation come to faith (**Revelation 5:9**). This will usher in a golden age on earth. When Christ returns, He will find a world that for the most part has already decided to follow Him, THOUGH THERE WILL BE AN EXPLOSION OF EVIL AT THE VERY END THAT CHRIST WILL CRUSH. Postmillennialists believe that the church replaced Israel in God's redemptive plan so that the promises made to Israel are now intended for the church. WW1 and WW2 took some of the shine off of this view as nearly twenty centuries after our Lord's ascension, the world seemed to be going to Hell at a faster pace than ever. (2) **Amillennialism** – This view is very similar to postmillennialism. It also says that the tribulation and millennial kingdom occur during the church age (now), but not one AFTER the other. ***They take place at the same time***. Again, the rule of Christ is not a physical, visible rule over the earth, but is in the hearts of those who follow Him (the church). They also believe that the church has replaced Israel and now receives the blessings intended for the Jews. Both of these views see no rapture of the church, but only a second coming of our Lord followed by ONE GENERAL RESURRECTION AND ONE JUDGMENT that precede the new heavens and the new earth. (3) **Premillennialism** – This is the view of our church. We believe in the rapture of the church, a seven-year period of tribulation, the purpose of which is to bring Israel to faith in Christ, followed by a literal and visible return of Christ to earth to reign over the world. NOW LET'S EXPLORE WHAT THIS MEANS FOR US.

What is the millennial kingdom? **It is the future reign of Christ which will come suddenly into existence because of the Lord's visible and bodily** (i.e., resurrected body) **return to earth**. It will not happen gradually over a long period of time, but

will IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW THE LORD'S SECOND COMING. The passage I just read to you from **Revelation 20** speaks of two resurrections. **The first** recognizes those who came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. That's the millennial kingdom! **The latter**, we're told, did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This would be the second resurrection.

What is its purpose? When God created Adam and Eve, He gave them dominion over the earth (**Genesis 1:26**). However, they chose to disobey God and handed the ruling authority over the world to Satan (**Luke 4:5-6 -- The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. 6 And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to**). Since then, Satan has operated as the ruler of this world (**See John 12:31**). IN HIS FUTURE KINGDOM ON EARTH, CHRIST WILL DEMONSTRATE TO ALL OF CREATION THAT HE IS THE SOVEREIGN GOD. It was on this earth that God was seemingly defeated (in Eden and at the cross) and so it shall be on this earth where He must be clearly victorious. It is at this time that God's promises to **Abraham** (**Genesis 12:2-3**), **David** (**2 Samuel 7:8-16**) and **the Jews will be fulfilled** (**Ezekiel 36:24-31 -- 'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28 You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. 29 I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you. 30 I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine. 31 Then you will remember your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable practices.**

What does the Bible teach about the millennial kingdom?

- **In the millennial kingdom**, **our glorified Lord Jesus Himself will be present**. He will be a benevolent dictator over the entire earth who will reign in righteousness with an iron scepter (**Psalm 2:9**). Why will this be necessary since everyone entering the millennial kingdom will be a believer in Jesus? At the end of tribulation, righteous Jews and Gentiles still possessing an earthly body and a sin nature to be crucified will be subjects of Christ as He reigns over the earth. They will have children who have children who have children etc. Not everyone

will walk with the Lord all the time. Some will give in to their sin nature. When they do, Christ will discipline them. Still, the prevailing environment in Christ's kingdom will be righteousness. In fact, the Bible says there will be PEACE (**Isaiah 2:4**) and JOY (**Isaiah 9:3-4**) and a FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD (**Jeremiah 31:34 -- No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the Lord. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more"**) as He sits on His throne.

- **In the millennial kingdom**, **Satan will be bound** – **Revelation 20:1-3 -- Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. 2 And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, 3 and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended.** Remember, Satan, as the ruler of this world, is able to deceive unbelievers by blinding their minds to the truth **(See 2 Corinthians 4:3-4.** He's still doing it, in fact. Just this week I read a comment made about our new speaker of the house of representatives, Mike Johnson, who has repeatedly said, "***I am a Bible-believing Christian***," He said. "***Someone asked me today in the media, they said, 'Well, it's curious. People are curious, what does Mike Johnson think about any issue under the sun?***'" "***I said, 'Well, go pick up a Bible off your shelf and read it. That's my worldview***.'" PEOPLE ARE FREAKING OUT OVER THIS. Jen Psaki, the former press secretary to President Biden said, "***You heard that right … The Bible doesn't just inform his worldview, it is his worldview***." In an article for MSNBC, Psaki warned her audience that Johnson is a scary speaker for more than just his political beliefs. "***Most Americans might not be able to pick Mike Johnson out of a lineup, but in reality, he's far from benign***," Psaki wrote. "***It's not just his political ideology that should scare us. Johnson is basically a Christian fundamentalist***." **Psychologist Lucia Grosaru** posted, ***"When a country is ruled based on religious principles, you get the extremism that managed to survive through the millennia. Irrational beliefs should not inspire social policies. Mythology is to be studied (beautiful field) but has no active place in modern societies***." This is their view in spite of the fact that many of our founding fathers saw it very differently. DECEIVED? YES. Listen to these words from Thomas Jefferson – "***The Christian religion … is a religion of all others most friendly to liberty, science and the freest expression of the human mind***." John Adams – "***I have examined all religions … and the result is that the Bible is the***

best book in the world!" WHO'S BEHIND ALL THESE LIES? The devil. But when Christ returns, the kingdom will be ripped from his hands as Satan will be bound and cast into the Abyss. Then everyone will worship the Lord and this worship will be centered in the new temple in Jerusalem (**Isaiah 2:2-4**).

- **In the millennial kingdom**, **the Davidic covenant will be fulfilled.** In **2 Samuel 7:8-16** God made an unconditional agreement with King David in which He promised to make David's name great, give him rest from his enemies, that someone from David's physical line would build a house for His name (Solomon) and his family line will endure forever, his throne would be established forever, and the Jews will endure forever. The first two happened during David's lifetime. The next one right after when Solomon took the throne. But as for his house, his kingdom and his throne, we haven't reached forever yet. That won't happen until Christ reigns over the earth in the MILLENNIAL KINGDOM and over all in the NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH.
- **In the millennial kingdom**, **all other kingdoms will end**. That's what we're told in **Daniel chapter two**. It is only after God has destroyed the kingdoms of gold, silver, bronze and iron that He will set up His kingdom. This couldn't be talking about the first coming of Christ to Bethlehem, because there WERE and STILL ARE human kingdoms. It is at the second coming of Christ that He will destroy all human kingdoms and establish His own kingdom.
- **In the millennial kingdom**, **the twelve apostles** (**Matthew 19:28 -- Jesus said to His disciples, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel**) **and some saints will return to reign with Him** (**1 Corinthians 6:2 -- Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? Revelation 20:4 -- I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshiped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years**).
- **In the millennial kingdom, the curse upon the earth will be lifted and sickness and deformity will end. The Bible tells us that the whole earth groans for its redemption in Romans 8:19-23.** What's this referring to? When Adam and Eve sinned, God cursed the earth -- **Genesis 3:17-18** -- "**Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field**." When Christ reigns, the whole earth will be liberated from its bondage.

Not only will the earth be restored to its original blessed position, but so will mankind. No one living in Zion will say "**I am ill**" (**Isaiah 33:24**).

- **At the end of the millennial kingdom, there will be short-lived rebellion led by Satan that will be unsuccessful. Before the start of the eternal kingdom of God, a brief rebellion will be led by Satan but be utterly vanquished by the Lord (Revelation 20:7-9 -- When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9 They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them).**

Review: **In the Millennial Kingdom** … (1) **our glorified Lord Jesus Himself will be present; (2) Satan will be bound; (3) the Davidic covenant will be fulfilled; (4) all other kingdoms will end; (5) the twelve apostles and some saints will return to reign with Him; (6) the curse upon the earth will be lifted and sickness and deformity will end; and (7) there will be short-lived rebellion led by Satan that will be unsuccessful.**

Conclusion: The **PBS series *Civilizations*** surveys the role art has played in forging humanity. Art can tell us much about where a culture has been and where it is going. Near the end of the first episode, viewers are taken to the **Mayan city of Calakmul in Mexico**. The city was once one of the most influential metropolitan areas in a vast empire, known as the **Kingdom of the Snake**. Entombed beneath a canopy of trees rests the remains of more than 6,500 buildings. The tallest is a massive ornately decorated temple whose steps climb to 180 feet (a height greater than a 15-story building). Standing at the foot of a massive structure, abandoned now for more than 1,000 years, an unnamed archeologist explains the cultural rationale for such an ornate, expansive building: "**Ultimately, all civilizations want exactly what they can't have; the conquest of time. So, they build bigger, and higher, and grander, as if they could build their way out of mortality. It never works. There always comes a moment when the most populous of cities with their markets and temples and palaces and funeral tombs are simply abandoned. And that most indefatigable leveler of all, mother nature, closes in, covering the place with desert sand or strangling it with vegetation. And then civilization dies the death of deaths, invisibility**." Listen: All man-made nations come to an end. But there is a government which will stand the test of time. Isaiah writes, "**Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end. . . The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this**" (**Isaiah 9:7**). This kingdom, inaugurated at Jesus' first

coming will be forever established at His second coming when He reigns over the earth for a thousand years and then into eternity.