



Revelation

Part 4 A Study of the End Times

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Today we continue this series with Part 4. We're talking about the Millennial Kingdom. I'm here to tell you after the last couple of weeks, it's been heavy and today is joyful. I kind of got stuck with the fun part of the story, and I'm excited to share that with you today. We are going to talk about the Millennial Kingdom, and we are going to answer three questions very specifically.

- 1 What is the Millennial Kingdom?
- 2 Why is the Millennial Kingdom an important part of God's plan?
- 3 What is the role of Christians in the Millennial Kingdom.

Obviously, we are in an election season. I've been here at Woodland Hills now for 20 years. I moved here in 2005 and started attending church here. I started helping out with the youth group and we would meet over at the YMCA. Over those 20 years, I've been studying and preparing for this message. I feel like this might be the most political message that I've ever heard at Woodland Hills Family Church. How many of you your heart constricts when I say that? I had some in the front row that were whooping and hollering. They were really excited about it at the first service.

We are going to talk politics because God's Kingdom is going to be a government like none other. When I was in my twenties, I was one of those young men that couldn't care less about politics. I didn't bother to vote. I didn't really think that my vote mattered. To be honest, I was single and so I had some other things that I needed to pursue that took all of my attention. I just didn't care.

We had a couple of kids show up in my 30s and I began to think a little bit differently. I realized that one day soon, these kids were going to be out of my control, out of the reign of my government, and they were going to be out in the world. I became much more concerned with the structure that they would be living in.

Now, even in my 40s, I've got an opinion. I'm eager to vote. I study the issues; I'm watching economics like all of these things matter more and more because I've got these kids, and I feel some measure of stewardship over what we have. I'm here to tell you that I love the United States of America. I love this country, but I'm also here to tell you that we're broken. And I want to be very careful that we don't put our hope in policy, in a party, in a politician, because according to the timeline of scripture, this thing is broken. And the United States is not our great hope. And if we put our hope in any of those things, guess what? We will be let down.

The beauty of today's message is that there is a government that is unflappable, it is unstoppable, it is pure, it is holy, it is perfect, and it will be a beautiful part of each one of our stories. In fact, as God writes the story of your life, the Millennial Kingdom is a part of it for those of you who place their trust in Jesus. We need to know where we come from and where we are going. That's why today's conversation is important. As I talk about a country, I love our freedoms. I love entrepreneurship, I love watching people go out and live out dreams and start companies and hire people and built cultures. I've got a bunch of friends, even in our community, that have launched businesses this year and I'm just enthralled. I'm just cheering them on in what they are doing. I love it.

We also are in a unique place that frankly cashes in on our religious freedom. When school gets started, go to the various restaurants around this town before school and work. Guess what you are going to find all over this city and all over our area. You're going to find Bible Studies all over the place. I'm so thankful for that. I'm thankful for our right to bear arms. You know what I'm talking about, Bruce. Ole lightning and thunder. Stay out of the storm, bro.

There are some great things about America. Granted, we all know it's a broken system, but there are some great things. We get to experience freedom on a daily basis, but I'm here to tell you if you were to just boil down all the greatest parts, if you were to sift out all of the mess, all the greatest parts of America represent but a glimmer of how good the Millennial Kingdom will be. You tracking with me? What we are talking about today is what you have to look forward to as a part of God's plan.

Onto our first question. **What is the Millennial Kingdom?** I want to take you to a familiar verse. It's one that comes up every Christmas. Interestingly, as I've been studying the Millennial Kingdom... I've been studying for a while, and I keep running into these Christmas verses. Verses we associate with Christmas. So many of them actually are speaking prophetically into the Millennial Kingdom that we look forward to.

Isaiah 9 talks about that specifically in this passage, it says, *6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.* There will be no end to the increase of his government or of peace. Is that good news?

I want to connect with some of you. Over the last year, I have been probably as anxious as I have been in my whole life. In fact, I have to look back to my sophomore year of high school when some girl broke up with me, to remember this level of anxiety. So, my emotional state is essentially like a pubescent teenage boy.

I've been going through a season of transition, and I just have been anxious. There have been many nights where I have been unable to fall asleep. There have been many mornings that typically I'll wake up and go sit on our porch. And many mornings over the last year, you would see me sitting in my rocking chair with my face in my hands. It's just been a grind. There is probably some percentage of us sitting in here now who are walking through that. One hundred percent of us sitting here, watching online have experienced that before because it's a part of this broken human condition. But for the last year, it has been tough sledding, personally. As I was studying the Millennial Kingdom, it's kind of funny... Adam was given like 16 chapters of revelation or something to cover in one Sunday. He did a great job. I've been given 10 verses, which maybe that says a lot about me, and where I fit in this.

But I got my 10 verses. But the Old Testament is chocked full of commentary on these 10 verses. It puts the meat on the bones of what we know about the Millennial Kingdom, from what John wrote in the Book of Revelation.

I've been studying for months, but on Tuesday, I ran into Isaiah 35, and it was one of those moments where my face is in my hands. I want to encourage you with it today. Isaiah 35 is a passage where God is prophetically speaking through Isaiah to show us what the Millennial Kingdom will belike when Jesus sits on the throne.

It starts off this way:

The desert and the parched land will be glad... This hit me in a moment in my life where I've just felt like I've been in the wilderness. I read that first verse. The wilderness and the desert will be glad... God filled my heart with hope, enough hope to go out and live another day with a full heart and full of endurance. Isaiah 35 goes on and I'm going to just hit some bullet points.

... the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom;

it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.

The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,

the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;

they will see the glory of the Lord,

the splendor of our God.

3 Strengthen the feeble hands,

steady the knees that give way;

4 say to those with fearful hearts,

"Be strong, do not fear;

your God will come,

he will come with vengeance;

with divine retribution

he will come to save you."

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened

and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,

and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Water will gush forth in the wilderness

and streams in the desert.

7 The burning sand will become a pool,

the thirsty ground bubbling springs.

In the haunts where jackals once lay,

grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

8 And a highway will be there;

it will be called the Way of Holiness;

it will be for those who walk on that Way.

***The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
9 No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.***

***But only the redeemed will walk there,
10 and those the Lord has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.***

I have good news, church. The Millennial will be marked by gladness, flourishing, and joy. Remember what I said earlier. The Millennial Kingdom, for those who are followers of Jesus, it's a part of your story. You get to personalize this. The Millennial Kingdom, this part of your story, will be marked by gladness, flourishing, and joy.

So, where does this fit in the overall timeline? Ted used this very simple timeline a couple of weeks ago and I want to bring it back up just to kind of reset the stage. We're currently living in the Church age and, according to Matthew 25, like birth pangs, things are going to get worse. That's why we don't put our hope in a Politician, in a party in the United States. Things are going to get worse and there will be a great day where Jesus comes, and he raptures the church. He takes those who are living and those who have deceased and he brings them up to heaven with him. At that time, the influence that has restrained evil will be removed.

For the first three and a half years of the tribulation, a world leader will rise up, the Antichrist, and he will win over the world with peace. He will make peace. He will make peace with Jerusalem. And just when the whole world has been deceived at the three-and-a-half-year point, he will take his seat on the throne, in the temple as God himself. It's called apostasy, the abomination of desolation. And at that point, literally all hell will break loose on earth. During this seven-year tribulation, the Jewish people, the nation of Israel, many of them who have rejected Jesus as Messiah throughout the centuries, many of them will come to Jesus in great revival. I believe that they will be revived because they have the scriptures, their hearts have been calloused, their eyes have been blind to the Old Testament pointing to Jesus Christ as their Messiah, the Savior of the World, and their hearts will be awakened.

Then, all of those who were raptured and raised from the dead, all of the saints of all time, which includes all of us who are seated in here who have a relationship with Christ, will come riding in behind Jesus on white horses. And all the armies of the earth will gather together and Jesus himself will strike them all down with the sword that comes from his mouth. The Antichrist and his religious leader or political leader will be thrown in the Lake of Fire and Satan himself will be thrown in the abyss and locked away for a thousand years as a part of God's plan.

During that thousand years, Jesus will take his rightful seat on the Throne of David, and he will righteously rule over the earth for 1,000 years with his saints. Those that live through the tribulation and gave their hearts to Christ, human beings in the flesh, they will have children throughout the Millennial Kingdom, and they will experience great flourishing. But during that season, those that are born to those that live through the tribulation, gave their hearts to Christ, some of those will stray, even under the righteous rule of Christ, and at the end of this thousand-year reign, according to God's plan, he will release Satan one last time who will deceive the nations and gather up the armies. They will march on Jerusalem one last time and in an act of justice, fire will rain from heaven and consume the armies of the earth, and we will enter in to our eternal state following the great white throne of judgment. It's easy, right? It's just Revelation, it's no big deal. I don't know why you are all struggling with this.

We are going to turn to Revelation 20. And I want to take the 10 verses that I've been entrusted with, and we are going to read through these 10 verses and we're going to see what John has to say about this millennial time, millennial 1,000-year reign of Jesus.

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations...

So, in the Millennial Kingdom, Satan's agent will be bound and the deception that came from him will be removed from the earth. He won't deceive the nations any more ***...anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.***

This raises a question for me. why? Why do we have to do this? This is going to be one of the questions that we answer as to why the Millennial Kingdom is an important part of God's plan. We are going to get to that.

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 about Jesus and because of the word of God. They 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 a thousand years.

So, during that seven-year tribulation, there were many that were martyred, that came to Christ, that died during that tribulation season, and when Jesus comes back, he raises them to reign with him in eternity along with the rest of the saints.

5 (The rest of the dead... So, the only dead that are left at this point are the wicked dead who have not turned their hearts to Christ. They died separated from God. 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 are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

Here's how it ends

The Judgment of Satan

7 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—and 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. 10 And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

This is an important distinction that Satan is not going to be the Lord of hell. He's going to be tortured in hell. There will be eternal punishment for him, the beast, and the false prophet. So, back to this question. Why is the Millennial Kingdom an important part of God's plan?

God used a man named Abraham in the Old Testament. He gave him a special promise. We call it the Abraham Covenant. The word *covenant* simply means promise. So, he gave Abraham a promise of three things: Land, seed, and blessing. He said, *"I'm going to give you a promised land that I have set apart for you. I'm going to give you a people that are going to be many, many over the centuries. And then I'm going to bless you. I have a special plan for this nation and my hand is going to be upon you. Land, Seed, and blessing."*

In Jeremiah 21: 33, Jeremiah writes, and he's speaking of the Millennial Kingdom, and he is telling the Jewish people that there is a new covenant and a new promise that God is going to follow through on his promises.

"Let me remind you that I am a God that follows through on my promises."

I want to show you three promises that God made to Israel that are very special and that he's going to follow through on and you can see here that while Israel, in large part, has rejected Jesus as the Messiah, they go through this tribulation season and in large part the nation is restored through a revival to Jesus. And in the Millennial Kingdom, they are going to get to experience many of these promises that have yet to be fulfilled as part of God's plan.

1 God promised Israel they would dwell in the Promised Land. Now I did not know this until I was studying it over the last couple of months. In Genesis 18, God describes the Promised Land. He gives specifics. This is the land that I want you to dwell in. and it is far reaching land – bigger than what I had remembered. The specific land covers from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and parts of Syria and Iraq. It's a large expanse. The Promised Land has never been fully indwelt by the people of Israel. It's a promise that has not yet been fulfilled in its entirety. And God has promised that the nation of Israel will get to live that out and live in the Promised Land.

2 God promised the nations of the world they would live in peace under the reign of Jesus. Daniel prophesied about Jesus, about the Messiah, the anointed one that would come and reign and sit on the throne of David and he said there will be everlasting peace under his reign. That's a promise that we have yet to fulfill through Jesus.

3 God promised that the curse would be lifted. All promises that have been given to the Nation of Israel that will be fulfilled in the Millennial Kingdom.

Dr. David Jeremiah, a guy way smarter than I am, says, *"The main purpose of Jesus's thousand-year reign is to fulfill the prophecies given to Israel and the promises made to Jesus, the nations, and the whole earth. God's covenants were voluntary and one sided. He promised he would bless Israel and restore the world in specific ways and he will."*

4 What will the role of Christians be in the Millennial Kingdom? I was thinking about just how important purpose is, living on earth today. A lot of the despondency and the despair and the lack of direction, and the apathy that we see in people today is because they're living without any purpose. They're chasing down all these worldly pursuits only to find that they are coming up empty. It's because they live without purpose. Interestingly, our purpose does not end when we die. In fact, as a part of God's plan, he has a specific role that we will get to fulfill in the Millennial Kingdom. You'll have purpose that you specifically are gifted for, charged with, and empowered to do in the Millennial Kingdom. To me, that's exciting.

I am actually covered, head to toe, in poison ivy right now. Loving it. Loving the curse. The reason I'm covered in poison ivy is because over the last couple of weeks, I've cleared out a pasture that was overgrown. I had a mini excavator, and I was living my best life on that thing. I was just covered in dust in my eyes and my ears, all sweaty and an absolute mess. I had just completely torn the place apart. Had massive bonfires. They were relatively safe. They have since smoldered out. But while they were smoldering, I'm sitting over and looking at all I have done over the last couple of weeks and there's this tremendous satisfaction. The pasture west of my house is my favorite pasture in the whole world. The reason it's so satisfying is because I worked for it. That was land that I labored over; I was steward over. I have poison ivy, and it was hard and it was broken, but there is still some sweet satisfaction.

I'm here to tell you, in the millennial kingdom, that satisfaction I believe is going to be multiplied beyond your wildest dreams. God has a plan for you, and it does not stop in this lifetime.

Let me rip through some of the specific expectations that you can have of the Millennial Kingdom.

1 Reigning with christ. 2 Timothy 2: 12 for those who have been in the grind, I want to encourage you with what it says. Paul tells Timothy, ***If we endure, we will also reign.*** If you endure with him in this life, you will also reign with him in the life to come. That's good news. And in Luke 19, Jesus tells the parable of a master that leaves his servant in charge of some of his money. Some make 10%, some make 20%, some make 100%, and another one squandered it, burying it under a rock out of fear. He says, To him who was faithful with a little, he or she will also be entrusted with much. In other words, the endurance you show in this lifetime, God's going to honor it with responsibility and favor in the life to come.

2 Judging the nations. Paul says to the Corinthians churches “Do you not know that you will be judges of the world? In other words, there will be a righteous judicial system. Anybody look forward to that? There will be a righteous judicial system. And I would be willing to bet there will be a number of you in here that will be specifically charged as judges under Jesus himself who sits on the throne and judges in righteousness.

3 there will be priests of God. This one I love. So, there will be generations that are born during the Millennial Kingdom. They’ll get to experience the blessings of living under Jesus, but they will each have a faith decision to make. I believe that the priests of God and the Ministers of God will have a responsibility to care for, love, and to minister to those people. I would be willing to bet that the priests and the ministers of God in the Millennial Kingdom might surprise you who they are. I wouldn’t expect a bunch of pastors. Some of the best priests and ministers around here are the ones waiting behind the counter or working at the hospital or working at nursing homes. I just can’t imagine the people who will be elevated and given a role and responsibility for Jesus to say, “I want you to go do my ministry”

4 enjoying the blessings of the kingdom. 1 Corinthians 15 says you will receive an imperishable body. So, all the ails of this world will be gone. It says that the sting from death will be removed. And in the Millennial Kingdom there will be unbelievable, unadulterated joy.

5 We’ll get to participate in the restoration of creation. I want to read this passage from Romans 8 it says this: ***Creation will be set free from it’s slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.***

The way that I understand that is that we are going to have a responsibility of taking this broken earth that’s been polluted and poorly managed and we are going to, with Jesus’ instruction, bring it back to life. We are going to reintroduce it to flourishing. I can’t imagine all the ways that will happen, but I expect that there will be a great adventure in seeing creation restored according to Go’s plan.

6 Preparing for the eternal state. I’m not going to steal all of Ted’s thunder, but if you guys continue to read through revelation in study for next week, you are going to find out that there will be a new heaven and a new earth. And the sheer size, magnitude, and grandeur of the new heaven.... It’s very hard to understand how massive it is. But I think it’s going to take a thousand years for our architects, our builders, our engineers, with Christ’s supervision, to build this magnificent eternal city. I think we are going to have a role to play in this transition from brokenness to beauty. We’ll be preparing for the eternal state.

Here's my final charge for today. This really goes out to the guy or gal who can identify with the rocking on my front porch with your face buried in your hands. There’s a catchy saying – when in doubt zoom out. I want to encourage you that it is okay to dream of the Millennial Kingdom. It’s okay to long for it. It’s okay to anticipate it. It’s okay to crave it. Because when we zoom out, and we look at God’s plan for our life and the beauty that he has for you, you can take your face out of your palm and the difficulties that the day presents are put into proper perspective. And I have to tell you, even as recent as Tuesday morning, God gave me the perspective to endure with a happy heart. I think it might be good to do this on a daily basis. The days that are in front of us are just hard. Are they not? We need a godly perspective. What I want you to know this morning as you’re walking out of here is:

God love you. He sees you right where you're at. He knows your aches, your pains, your worries, your concerns, your frustrations, your depression, your negativity, whatever it might be. He can see all of those things and they matter.

Finally, he has a plan for your life. He has a plan and a purpose for today for you and every day that comes after that. And then even beyond that, part of his plan for your life is perfect and complete redemption in every way. There is one phrase I want to end on that came up over and over again through the scriptures I've been studying and it's this: **Enter into the Joy of the Lord.**

We have plenty of reason to rejoice, church. Is God good? Indeed, he is.

Lord, we just come to you, and I thank you for so much hope that is set before us. We thank you, God, for our anchor in Jesus no matter the storms that are raging around us, God, we are anchored in you. We stand on the thousand-foot bedrock of your Word. Lord Jesus, I was to pray encouragement over the body of Christ that stands before us today. Bless them in the name of Jesus and it's in his name we pray... Amen