

The Golden Age

Thy Kingdom Come – Part VI

Revelation 20:4-6

Introduction – “The Golden Age”

There are three words that come from Greek mythology to express a time of perfect peace, harmony, prosperity, and equality. These words are, “The Golden Age”.

Frankly, this has been the pursuit of mankind since the days of Adam’s fall and exile from the Garden of Eden. It was Nimrod’s grand design in the building of Babylon. It will be the antichrist’s agenda as he attempts to rule the planet and usher in a one-world government and one-world religion.

There is something in the heart of mankind that longs for a utopia where peace and justice reign supreme. I believe it is nothing less than the tracing of divine truth, written on the heart.

God also built into the heart of man a sense of coming judgment and a belief that is nearly universal in some sort of coming world disaster. Recent events in Haiti only heighten the sense of our world crumbling into a future series of catastrophes.

One more disaster movie was released to seize the attention of our culture, and it is simply named “2012”. The caption underneath the movie title is the phrase, “We Were Warned”. Would anybody stand in line to watch a movie about planet Earth’s upheaval through devastating cataclysmic events? Its opening weekend raked in a whopping 200 million dollars worldwide.

I have not seen this movie – I will wait until Walmart sells it for five bucks.

It is interesting, is it not, that tens of thousands of people all over the world wanted to watch something that fed their already-brimming anxiety with one more description of a coming cataclysmic upheaval of planet Earth.

Two contrasting, incompatible notions are at the same time stamped on every human heart: the belief in some kind of upcoming worldwide disaster and the desire for and hope in a coming season of global unity, worldwide peace and prosperity.

For the believer, these two ideas are not impossible notions. Only the Bible provides the

information and details, and both are going to take place on planet Earth.

The Tribulation, as we have seen in Revelation chapters 6-19, is a series of one cataclysmic event after another brought about by the wrath of God as He judges humanity and all the nations of the world. At the same time, it prepares a redeemed people and a redeemed nation of Israel for her returning Messiah. When it is over, the majority of humanity is dead and a large portion of the planet is devastated.

The Bible records the last of the Tribulation events as a time when most of the remaining nations coalesce their armies into one massive army to battle the Lord as He descends to Jerusalem and stands on the Mount of Olives. This global army is defeated in the Battle of Armageddon by Christ’s own word. Jesus Christ then establishes His rule on planet Earth.

This ushers in a season of global unity, peace, and prosperity. The golden age really does come true!

The idea of a golden age is stamped into the heart of every human being. It is nothing more than the faint etching of God’s truth written into the mind of mankind.

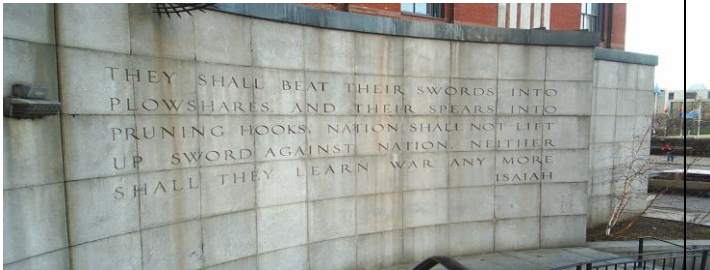
I googled the words “the golden age” and ended up watching one particular guru-style teacher. He was talking about the coming age being the age of the crown, as he said, “We’re approaching the golden age of the crown.”

This man does not know how right he is. However, if we mention to him that the crown belongs to Christ, that is the end of the discussion, right?

Our current United Nations, now representing more than 190 nations, rejects the truth of Christ and His coming reign. They despise the concept of a creator God who came to earth as God the Son and died on the cross to pay the just penalty for the sins of the world. They reject the notion that all who place their faith in this suffering Messiah will one day reign with Him when He returns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. However, it is tragically ironic that although the United Nations rejects all of

this, they long for a united, peaceful global community – and they long for this in biblical terms.

Directly across the street from the United Nations building on First Avenue in downtown New York is a plaza where for the past sixty years, peace protests and political rallies for world unity and peace have taken place. On this plaza is a wall, or monument. Engraved into the monument are the words of Isaiah the prophet speaking of the Millennial Kingdom – when Christ rules on earth.



The text on this wall reads:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares [plows], and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah

So although mankind does not want any part of surrender to Jesus the Ruler, they cannot resist the biblical promise of a coming age in which war will be a forgotten memory and global unity will actually bring about an amazing time of peace and prosperity.

There is another view of the wall that I found online with people standing in front of it having their picture made. It shows a better perspective of just how magnificent this monument is.



We can see the verse engraved into the wall and that at the end of the quote is the prophet's name – Isaiah. This monument is nicknamed the “Isaiah Wall”.

By the way, the specific reference in Isaiah has been left off. There is only the name “Isaiah” with no chapter and verse. Perhaps they are afraid someone might look it up – because if they did, they would discover that the verse on this monument is

conveniently cut in half. The portion engraved into the wall says nothing about Jesus Christ.

Again, the text on the wall says:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Isaiah

This is a wonderful promise, is it not?

It happens to be from Isaiah chapter 2, verse 4, and with the preceding text included, it reads:

. . . For the law will go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

And He will judge between the nations, and will render decisions for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

(Isaiah 2:3b-4)

In other words, this prophecy of global peace is directly tied to the literal reign of Jesus Christ from Jerusalem, where He will be the ruler of the nations.

We cannot have the last part of this verse without the first part of the verse. We cannot have the golden age of the crown until Jesus Christ returns and reigns as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16). Our world wants a peaceful setting without a personal Savior.

One Christian artist painted a picture of Jesus Christ being excluded by the nations of our world as they in their futility attempt to bring about world peace.



You may have seen this picture of Jesus standing next to United Nations building on First Avenue knocking on the side, as if to say, “Would you like to include Me in your plans and hopes for world peace?”

Our world longs for peace – they just do not want the Prince of Peace.

The world really does not want to hear any talk of Jesus Christ returning as our sovereign Ruler. Because of their unbelief, all who refuse the claims of Jesus Christ will one day be excluded from the coming golden age. Unbelievers will not only miss heaven, they will miss the glorious prelude to heaven – the Millennial Kingdom of Christ on earth for a thousand years.

What will the time of Christ's reign on earth be like?

One author wrote,

Imagine a world [described by the prophets throughout the Old Testament] dominated by righteousness and goodness, a world where there is no injustice, where no court ever renders an unjust verdict, and where everyone is treated fairly. Imagine a world where what is true, right, and noble marks every aspect of life, including interpersonal relations, commerce, education, and government. Imagine a world where there is complete, total, and permanent peace, where joy abounds and good health prevails, so much so that people [the world's growing population] live for hundreds of years. Imagine a world where the curse is removed, where the environment is restored to the pristine purity of the Garden of Eden, where peace reigns even in the animal kingdom, so that "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion . . . together; and a little boy will lead them" (Isaiah 11:6).ⁱ

In the scriptures:

- There are about 330 prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Christ's coming.
- Of these prophecies, 109 were literally fulfilled during Christ's first coming, leaving about 220 yet to be fulfilled in His second coming.
- Among the 46 Old Testament prophets, fewer than 10 of them spoke of Christ's first coming – His birth, death, and resurrection, but 36 of them spoke of events connected to His second coming.
- There are about 1,500 Old Testament passages dealing with the second coming of the Messiah.

- In the New Testament, one out of every 25 verses refers directly to the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- There are nearly 2,000 references to the second coming of the King of Kings.

How do we know that the coming King, the ruling Messiah, is Jesus?

Are there two Messiahs?

Many Jewish scholars believe there must be two Messiahs – one who would suffer and one who would reign. If we only had the Old Testament we might be led to this conclusion since the prophets did not make a clear distinction at times between the first coming of Christ and His second coming.ⁱⁱ

By comparing the two testaments, we have a clear picture that it is not two men being written about, but one man, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

All the way back in Genesis, the Bible records that the ruling scepter, the King's staff, so to speak, will be in the hand of a descendant of Judah (Genesis 49:9-10). Luke carefully traces Christ's genealogy back through and to the tribe of Judah (Luke 3:23-38).

The prophet Micah revealed the birth place of the Messiah as Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Luke revealed that Christ was indeed born in Bethlehem (Luke 2:4-7).

Isaiah prophesied,

. . . Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Immanuel [that is, God with us]. (Isaiah 7:14)

The angel Gabriel came to a virgin named Mary and said,

. . . Behold, you shall conceive . . . and bear a son . . . [He] . . . shall be called the Son of God. (Luke 1:27-35)

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would make...

. . . every valley . . . exalted and every mountain . . . low; the crooked places . . . straight and the rough places smooth (Isaiah 40:3-4)

John the Baptizer appears as a forerunner of Jesus and announces that Jesus will make . . .

. . . every valley . . . filled and every mountain . . . low; the crooked places . . . straight and the rough ways smooth (Luke 3:2-5)

David prophesied of the Messiah,

. . . [They] hate Me without a cause. (Psalm 35:19)

John's gospel records Jesus saying,

[They] hated Me [and] hated My Father also . . . but this has come to pass so that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated Me without a cause. (John 15:23-25)

Is the Old Testament Messiah the same person as Jesus Christ?

The prophet Zechariah said that the King of Israel would come into Jerusalem riding on a donkey and prophesied that the people would rejoice at their salvation (Zechariah 9:9). Jesus Christ rode on a donkey into Jerusalem, according to Mark's gospel and the people shouted, "Hosanna!" to the Son of David (Mark 11:7-10).

Even more specifically, David foretold of the Messiah's close friend with whom He ate bread lifting up his heel against Him (Psalm 41:9). In John's gospel, Judas Iscariot receives bread from Jesus hand and then slips out of the room to plan his betrayal (John 13:21-30).

Zechariah even prophesied that the price of betrayal would be thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:13). Matthew records the tragic event when Judas goes to the chief priests and elders following the arrest of Jesus and confesses to them that he has betrayed innocent blood. Judas then throws down the money they had given him – thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 27:3).

David prophesied of the Messiah's crucifixion as he wrote with divinely ordained foresight,

A band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced My hands and My feet. (Psalm 22:16)

John records that the resurrected Christ showed to Thomas the nail scars in His hands (John 20:27).

Paul wrote,

. . . He humbled Himself . . . unto death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)

David also wrote,

They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots. (Psalm 22:18)

Matthew records in his gospel,

And when they had crucified Him, they divided up His garments among themselves by casting lots. (Matthew 27:35)

How specific can they get?

Is the crucified Messiah the Savior who died for the sins of mankind?

Isaiah records,

. . . He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

All we like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has cause the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.

(Isaiah 53:5-6)

The apostle Paul wrote,

For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

(Romans 5:6-9)

David also wrote of the Lord's resurrection and leading "captivity captive" (Psalm 68:18).

Paul writes,

. . . When [Christ] ascended on high, He led captivity captive . . ." (Ephesians 4:8).

Is the Lord, the suffering Messiah of the Old Testament, the same person as the resurrected Jesus Christ of the New Testament?

The prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament agree in unison and without any contradiction. He is one and the same!

Will the Messiah rule the world?

Let me ask another question. If the Messiah of the Old Testament is the same Person as the Messiah of the New Testament, how do we know that this same Messiah will one day come back to literally rule the world?

Is it not enough that Jesus died for us and we can by faith have our sins forgiven and go to live with

Him in heaven? How do we know He is going to come back and rule on planet Earth?

We know that Jesus is coming back a second time for the same reasons we know He came the first time.

The scriptures and, in fact, the record of history as a witness, testify to the coming of Christ the first time, as well as His death and resurrection. This same inspired Book tells us He is coming back again. One day all of history will culminate in the appearing of Jesus Christ, and His redeemed with Him.

Jesus will not return to knock on the side of the United Nations building and politely ask to be included in their plans. He will not come back to say, "Would you be so kind as to let Me in?"

No, the current days of invitation will be over. Christ will come to judge the nations and set up His undisputed, uncontested, unchallenged, invincible throne.

Psalm chapter 2 reveals that the rule of Christ will be universal and absolute. Let us look at this – since I am probably not going to finish my introduction today anyway, let us take the time to turn there.

Listen to David as he writes of God the Father and God the Son in Psalm 2:1-8.

Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing?

In other words, "David, what is the futility that people are devising?"

The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying,

"Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!"

In other words, "We're not going to be accountable to God (the triune God, or here, God the Father) and we're not going to be constricted or restricted by His Anointed (this word can be translated 'Messiah')."

Now note verses 4-8.

He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them.

Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying,

"But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain [Jerusalem]."

I will surely tell of the decree of the Lord; He said to Me, "You are My Son, today I have begotten You.

"Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession."

In other words, the King is coming!

How do we respond to this? Look at verses 10-12 of this Psalm.

Now therefore, O kings, show discernment; take warning, O judges of the earth.

Worship the Lord with reverence and rejoice with trembling.

Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way. For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!

Is that a picture of Revelation chapter 20, verses 6-19, or what?

The wrath of God is revealed against the nations of the world in the Tribulation. Following Christ's return, the Son of God will be installed as the King, ruling in Jerusalem.

Thus begins the golden age.

Jeremiah, in chapter 30, prophesied that Israel would be converted and the land of Abraham restored to Israel's land. Paul did the same in Romans 11.

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah, Zephaniah, and more refer to this global kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital city of the King.

Isaiah, in chapter 9, verses 1-7, records that the millennial kingdom will be a time of unprecedented peace, world harmony, and justice.ⁱⁱⁱ

Micah repeats the prophecy of Isaiah and says that in the kingdom of our Lord,

. . . nations . . . will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war. (Micah 4:3)

The golden age will literally come to pass.

The nations that form the United Nations of our world want the right thing – they are just looking in the wrong direction.

The religious liberals are not helping with this problem – they are blind guides leading the blind. They would say that Jesus is not really coming back literally and physically – He just comes into our

lives. This is known as spiritualizing the second coming and many people do it, even though it is utterly ridiculous. The reason it is ridiculous is because every one of the prophecies relating to the first coming of Jesus Christ were not spiritual – they were literal.^{iv}

If the prophecies in the Old Testament related to Christ's first coming actually happened literally, why would the prophecies about His second coming be allegorical, spiritual, or mystical and not literal? If one prophecy says Jesus will be born in Bethlehem and we take it literally, why would we take the prophecies that Jesus will reign in Jerusalem with His redeemed spiritually?

We cannot create a dual hermeneutic – a dual interpretation of prophecy. We cannot say, "This one's literal, that one's spiritual; this one's literal, that one's spiritual; this one will happen, that one won't . . ."

No interpreter of prophecy has the authority or discernible right to take Bethlehem literally and Jerusalem spiritually.

We have every reason to believe that planet Earth during the Millennial Kingdom will physically experience the conditions of the Garden of Eden. Food will be plentiful and the animal kingdom will be tamed so that the nursing child can play with the cobra – which redefines a baby's rattle, doesn't it?! Isaiah writes the cow and the bear will graze together and the wolf will dwell with the lamb (Isaiah 11:6-7). Isaiah also says, in chapter 65, verse 20, that believers entering the kingdom having survived the Tribulation will experience the life spans of Adam and the early fathers. A one-hundred-year-old will be considered a young person.

Won't that be great? At one hundred years, will we need all our parts replaced? Not in the kingdom – a person will just be getting started.

Someone might say, "C'mon, how can that be? It can't be literal!"

What is harder to believe – people having bodies capable of living for hundreds of years in the Millennial Kingdom or you and me being given bodies capable of living *forever*? Can you figure out *forever*?

Is Christ really physically returning?

Jesus Christ knew there would be questions in the future about the literal nature of His return, so He made sure the angels announced His second coming just as they announced His first coming.

Turn to Acts chapter 1. The Lord is about to ascend and is surrounded by His disciples. He provides a final challenge and promise for them in verse 8.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.

Now watch what happens next in verses 9-11.

And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing [angels] stood beside them.

They also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus [this same Jesus], who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."

Did Jesus just ascend spiritually? Were the disciples having some sort of mystical experience that they saw with eyes of faith?

No. The disciples watched Jesus go up and lost sight of Him in the clouds. The angels then said, "He's coming back the same way." This was not mystical; not spiritual; not merely observed through eyes of faith, but the literal, physical ascent of a literal Savior.

The golden age will come one day and the Prince of Peace will physically come back to earth to reign. This Prince of Peace will be none other than Jesus Christ, the Lord.

How long will the reign of the Messiah last?

Now turn to Revelation 20. How long will the reign of Christ from Jerusalem last? Let us at least answer this question.

Notice verses 4-6.

Then I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony of Jesus and because of the word of God, and those who had not worshiped the beast [the antichrist] or his image, and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their

hand; and they came to life and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed. This is the first resurrection.

I will explain who “the rest of the dead” are in our next session.

Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection [us, by the way]; over these the second death [hellfire forever] has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years.

Now, how long will the kingdom reign of Christ be? Aw, we are really not told specifically, are we? We will just take this spiritually and not literally.

Six times in seven verses we are told “a thousand years”. There is no unbiased reason that anyone would say God is just throwing out a figure of speech. Nothing in the text indicates this. God does not repeat Himself because He cannot think of what to say next.

Underline the references to this specific timeframe in the first seven verses of chapter 20 as they appear:

1. verse 2, the last part – ***“and bound him for a thousand years”***;
2. verse 3, the middle part – ***“so that he would not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were completed”***;
3. verse 4, the last part – ***“reigned with Christ for a thousand years”***;
4. verse 5, the first part – ***“The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were completed”***;
5. verse 6, the last part – ***“will reign with Him for a thousand years”***;
6. verse 7, the first part – ***“When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released”***.

Someone who says, “I don’t think God means a thousand years,” has absolutely no justification apart from their own bias. God could not be clearer.

If you told your child:

1. “Go get in the car because I’m taking you to McDonald’s for an hour. It’s been two days since we’ve been there and I just can’t stand being away that long; it’s so peaceful there.”

2. “Listen, go get in the car. I’m taking you to McDonald’s for one hour.”
3. “Go get in the car, so I can take you to McDonald’s for one hour.”
4. “Listen, I want to take you to McDonald’s for one hour.”
5. “Hey, let’s go; I’m taking you to McDonald’s for one hour.”
6. “C’mon, get in the car; I’m going to take you to McDonald’s for one hour.”

What if your kid did not move and then said, “I didn’t think you were serious.”

You would go and get a Happy Meal all by yourself!

How many times does God have to tell us in these verses in Revelation, through the prophets and apostles, through our own Lord’s words, and from the lips of angels that there is a coming, returning physical presence and reign of Christ on earth that will include us by His side for one thousand years?

The golden age is coming because the Son of God is coming back.

The golden age is for real. And it is also written on the hearts of men and women as an intuitive truth and a dying wish, “Surely this world must be able to get along. Surely it could one day be unified. Surely there will be peace on earth some day.”

Ladies and gentlemen, there will be! There will be unprecedented prosperity, peace, unity, and joy on earth, but only after the Prince of Peace comes bringing us, His redeemed, with Him.

We will talk in detail in our next session about the Kingdom – its climate, topography, geography, animal kingdom, life span, new temple, and city of Jerusalem. The kingdom will be incredibly magnificent.

Now, though, at the outset, I wanted to talk about the King. He is the one Moses and the prophets spoke of; He is the Son of God – born of a virgin, sacrificed for sin on the cross, resurrected, ascended, and soon-to-come King.

We begin with Him because:

- there can be no peace without this Prince;
- there can be no return to the Garden of Eden’s conditions without this Creator;
- there can be no kingdom without a King.

He who went up . . . is coming back down again.

I love the words to the gospel song, “I didn’t see Jesus when He went up, but I’ll see Him when He comes down.”

Even more than this – I wasn’t with Him when He went up, but I’ll be with Him when He comes down!

I was not with Jesus when He went away, but I will be with Him when He comes back. I will, and you with me, who acknowledge that He is Messiah, God with us, the Savior who went up and is coming back down as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

ⁱ John MacArthur, Revelation: Volume 2 (Moody Press, 2000), p. 228.

ⁱⁱ Got Questions Ministries, <http://www.gotquestions.org/second-comin-Jesus-Christ.html>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sam Smith, What the Bible Says about the Future (unpublished notes), p. 48.

^{iv} John MacArthur, “Why Jesus Must Return to Earth, Part One,” <http://www.gty.org/Resources>.