The song “Viva La Vida” by Coldplay relates to the French Revolution, specifically to the fate of the King Louis the 16th. The line “I used to rule the world /seas would rise when I gave the word” refers to how Louis, and all the Bourbon kings, were **absolute monarchs** whose power remained ordained by God and unquestioned for thousands of years. There was a parliament, **the Estates General**, but it was not frequently assembled (previous to the revolution it had not been called since 1614) and the king was not required to follow its advice. “Missionaries in a foreign field” refers to how one cause of the Revolution was that France was bankrupt, partially due to its participation in the **American Revolution**. The line “now in the morning I sleep alone / sweep the streets I used to own” refers to **how The Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen** stripped Louis of his title and made him simply “Citizen Louis Capet,” no better or more powerful than any other person in France. “One minute I held the key /Next the walls were closed on me /And I discovered that my castles stand /Upon pillars of salt and pillars of sand” refer to how after the peasants stormed the **Palace of Versailles** during **the Women’s March of October of 1789**, the monarchy was forced to move from Versailles to Paris. “The puppet on the lonely string” indicates that Louis now longer had any control, but was a prisoner of **The National Assembly**. Next, “Revolutionaries wait/ For my head on a silver plate” refers to how after the King was put on trial for **treason** and found guilty, Louis was **guillotined** on January 21, 1793. However, not everyone supported this decision (like the **monarchists**), which is why when the songs says “now the old king is dead” it follows with “long live the King,” a phrase that shows some respect for the position. Finally, the “wicked and wild wind” mentioned in the song is a metaphor for the **French Revolution** and how, like a storm destroying a city, the Revolution completely changed French society. In a mere four years France went from being an absolute monarchy to a **democratic republic**.

**“Viva La Vida”** -Coldplay

I used to rule the world 🡪Louis used to be an absolute monarch  
Seas would rise when I gave the word  
Now in the morning, I sleep alone  
Sweep the streets I used to own 🡪 Declaration of Rights of Man stripped Louis of his title and power

I used to roll the dice  
Feel the fear in my enemy's eyes  
Listen as the crowd would sing  
"Now the old king is dead! Long live the king!" 🡪 Louis was guillotined, but not everyone supported it (like the Monarchists)

One minute I held the key  
Next the walls were closed on me  
And I discovered that my castles stand 🡪 Monarchy was forced to leave Versailles after the Women’s March  
Upon pillars of salt and pillars of sand

Chorus:

I hear Jerusalem bells are ringing  
Roman Cavalry choirs are singing  
Be my mirror, my sword and shield  
My missionaries in a foreign field 🡪 One cause of the Revolution was how France was bankrupt from the American Rev.  
For some reason I can't explain  
Once you go there was never, never a honest word  
And that was when I ruled the world

It was a wicked and wild wind 🡪 Metaphor for the French Revolution  
Blew down the doors to let me in  
Shattered windows and the sound of drums  
People couldn't believe what I'd become

Revolutionaries wait  
For my head on a silver plate 🡪 Louis was executed January 21, 1973  
Just a puppet on a lonely string 🡪 no power after title was stripped  
Oh who would ever want to be king? 🡪 Louis never really understood why people were against him, nor were all of France’s

problems entirely his fault