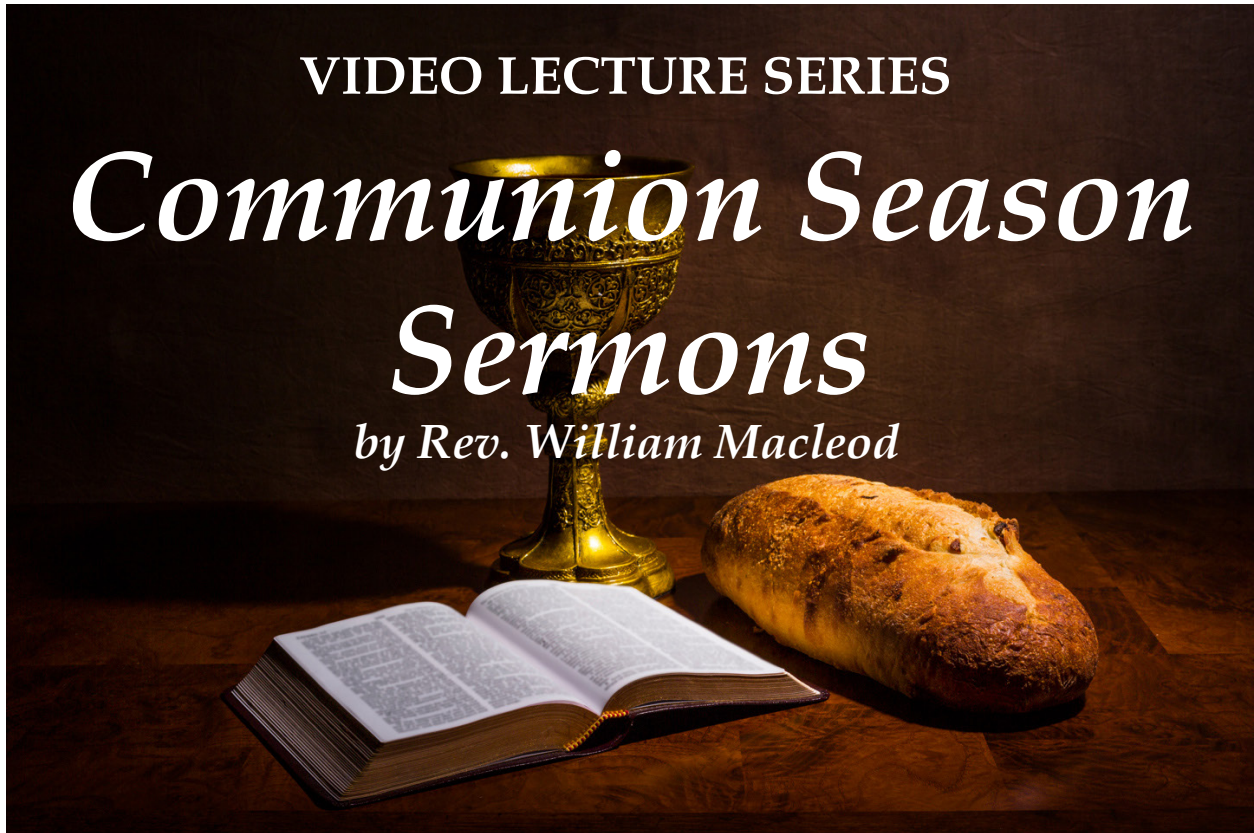


VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

Communion Season

Sermons

by Rev. William Macleod



Sermon #7

Christ is Coming Again

Revelation 20:20-21



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

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www/freechurchcontinuing.org



Communion Season Sermons

*An Introduction and 7 Sermons
by Rev. William Macleod*

Introduction (Luke 22:14–20)

Sermon #1: Pardon My Sins (Psalm 51:9–10)

Sermon #2: Prepare Me for Thy Presence (Psalm 24:3–4)

Sermon #3: Examine Yourself (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Sermon #4: Mary's Great Love (Mark 14:3)

Sermon #5: The Awful Cup (Luke 22:42) / Communion Address

Sermon #6: Salvation for Pharisees and Prodigals
(Luke 15:29–30)

Sermon #7: Christ is Coming Again (Revelation 22:20–21)

Communion Season Sermons

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Sermon #7

Christ is Coming Again (Revelation 20:20–21)

As we come to the end of our Communion Season, I would like to address you from the last two verses in the Bible—Revelation 22, verses 20 and 21. We'll read this whole chapter together.

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly, blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

“And I John saw these things, and heard them. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Particularly, these last two verses, Revelation 22, verses 20 and 21: “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.”

Here then we have the last two verses in the Bible. With this, the Divine Canon closes, the canon of Scripture. God has spoken through the prophets, through the apostles, and through his Son. And here are the final words before the great shout that will announce the return of Christ. He will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with of the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. And then shall we forever be with the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). So, at the end of a Communion Season, it’s appropriate for us to consider these words together.

First of all, we’re told here that *Christ is Coming Again*. “Surely I come quickly.” And this is a vital truth. The world is not going to go on forever. Neither is it going to end with a nuclear holocaust, as some think or fear; neither will it end with a climate catastrophe. Christ is King. He is set on God’s right hand, and he will reign there till his enemies are made his footstool. He has been given a kingdom of power over this world—kingship, and a reign over this earth. He’s head over all things for the benefit of his church.

When Christ came the first time, he came to save. He came in a state of humiliation, born in poverty, laid in a manger. He grew up in obscurity. He worked for a time as a carpenter, and then he was baptized, and he began his public ministry. For three and a half years, he went around preaching and teaching, performing miracles, declaring the kingdom, calling men and women to repentance. He says, “I came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give my life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He came to take our sins, and take our place; to be punished in our room and stead; to endure hell on the cross, so that we would have heaven when we die. He died that we might live. He says, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (John 11:25–26)—that is, never die eternally or in hell.

Christ died on the cross; he rose again on the third day; he ascended up to heaven; he sat at the right hand of God glorified; and he is there making continual intercession for us. He’s still our Prophet, our Priest, and our King. He’s the Prophet who spoke by his Spirit through the prophets in the Old Testament times, and through his apostles in the New Testament. And he still speaks by his Holy Spirit, taking the words of Scripture and applying them to our hearts, enlightening our minds, as we read the truth, so that we can understand it. He’s our Prophet, our Teacher, revealing the truth to us. He’s our Priest, who offered the great sacrifice for us on the cross of Calvary, and then took his own blood and entered into heaven, and sprinkled it upon the mercyseat, upon the throne of God in heaven, so that throne of God is, for us, a throne of grace, where we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. And he’s also the King. He’s the King and Head of his people. And he’s also King over the world, over heaven and earth. He’s King of all for the benefit of his church.

Remember when Jesus ascended up to heaven from the Mount of Olives? Two angels appeared to the disciples, “You men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus... shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him depart” (Acts 1:11). He’s coming again. He’s coming in the same way. He’s coming bodily, and he’s coming to judge the world. There’s a day of reckoning ahead for us all. Are you ready? Ready for the judgment day? Where will you be on that

day? Will you be calling on the mountains to fall on you and the hills to cover you from the face of him who sits upon the throne? Or you will be welcoming the return of Christ. Christ is coming again.

Secondly, *The Church Prays for Christ to Come*. “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus,” says the church. We have here a longing, a prayer. Is it your longing, and your prayer that Christ would come, that he would come soon? Surely, it’s a mark of the church that we are in love with Christ, and we long for his return. And why do we long for his return?

We long for his return, because it will be the completion of his exaltation. His exaltation began with his resurrection from the dead; and then, forty days later, his ascension into heaven; his sitting at the right hand of God; and it’s completed with his coming at the end of the world to judge the world. He will judge every man and woman who ever lived. So it’s a completion of his exaltation.

It’s also the glorification of Christ, and we want to see that. We love Jesus, and we want to see him fully glorified, that every eye would see him, and acknowledge him, and see his glory, and bow before him.

We long also to see the destruction of Satan, and the demons, and the wicked, and all the enemies of God. We long to see all those atheists, and agnostics, and followers of false religions, and followers of cults, who deny Christ—we long to see them bow the knee before him; if not converted in this world, then crushed into submission. We long to see Satan, the archenemy of God, on his knees before Christ, and his demons with him. The destruction of the devil and all God’s enemies.

But also, we’re looking forward to that day, because we wish to, and long to stop sinning ourselves. We long for our lust, and our pride, and our idolatry to cease. As Christians, we all sin, but we hate sin. We are the enemies of sin. We hate the devil, and we love Christ, and we would wish to please him. Because we love him, we want to keep his commandments, so we’re looking forward to that day when we’ll never sin again.

And we’re looking forward to that day when our warfare will be over. In this world, we’re always struggling, and fighting against sin, fighting against the world, the flesh, and the devil. But then, we’ll be victorious.

We’re looking for an end to the pain and the suffering in this world. And some people, some Christians suffer greatly, and there may be many years in their lives suffering with weakness, and disability, and pain. But all that will be over when Christ comes again.

And we long to be at home at last; at last with the family of God; at last with our Father in heaven; with our beloved Lord Jesus Christ; with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; with Peter, and James, and John; with the Reformers, Luther, and Calvin, and Knox, the great men and women of God in the past; and those fellow Christians that we have known who have departed to be with the Lord; we long to be at home with them.

And we long for the ushering in of the eternal kingdom of righteousness, where there’ll be no pain, no suffering, no sin, no misery, no temptation, no wickedness; but a perfect heaven and earth—a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness.

And we long particularly to see God; to behold him; to behold our God; to look at the Lord Jesus Christ; to look into that face, that face that we spat upon, that face that we mocked and ridiculed, the face of the one that we nailed to the cross and mocked as he died, the one who loved us and gave himself for us. We long to be with Jesus, looking at him, rejoicing in him, and delighting in his presence and fellowship.

Thirdly, *Christ is Coming Quickly*. He says here, “Surely I come quickly.” That is what he said 2,000 years ago. But there’s a problem—2,000 years; why has he not come already? Well, what we have to remember, what Peter tells us of, in 2 Peter chapter 3, is that “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years” (verse 8). In the light of eternity, what is a thousand years? It’s just like a day. It’s nothing. In the light of eternity, 2,000 years is just a moment. He’s coming quickly.

Peter also deals with those scoffers who would come, and he says, “Well, think back to the days of Noah.” There was Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and he was telling the people of his day that because of their sins, they were going to be destroyed. God was going to send a flood upon the earth. And the flood didn’t happen for a hundred and twenty years. Noah was busy building his ark, preaching to the people. Why did God not bring his flood for a hundred and twenty years? It was because God is longsuffering. He was giving people time to repent. They had days, weeks, months, years to repent. Time and time again, they heard Noah preaching, but they wouldn’t listen. In the end, they saw Noah entering into the ark, and the animals with him, but they still wouldn’t come and join him. They looked on, perhaps cynically and mocking. But then, the water—the rain began to fall, and the floods began to rise. And they came rushing to the ark, and knocking upon the door, but God had shut the door. And when God shuts a door, it can’t be opened.

The hundred and twenty years was a period of grace. Why has Christ not come today? Because he’s giving time to sinners to repent. He’s longsuffering, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. So the delay should encourage you, whoever you are, to turn to the Lord, to seek him to make your peace with him.

“Behold, I come quickly.” He comes quickly too, in the sense that death comes quickly. Even if we’re not alive when Christ returns, one thing we can be sure of is that Christ will come to take us by death. And death can often come very quickly, sometimes as a thief in the night. Life is short and uncertain. A person can have a brain hemorrhage, a heart attack. They can be knocked down and killed by a car. How quickly our life can be over! Are we ready? “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found”—he can’t always be found—“call ye upon him while he is near”—he won’t always be near (Isaiah 55:6). Number your days and apply your hearts unto wisdom (Psalm 90:12). Seek him. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33). And live every day in this world as if it were your last. Christ is coming quickly. Let us prepare.

And then, fourthly, *Could Christ Return Any Day?* Could he come back today? The Thessalonians thought that that was possible, and they were expecting Christ to return anytime. And some of them, because of that, gave up their daily work. They stopped working, and they were just sitting around worshipping, serving, waiting, expecting, looking for Christ to come. But Paul rebukes them for this. He tells them it’s wrong. If a person will not work, neither should he eat. Get back to your work, and work away each day in this world, earn your living, provide for your families (2 Thessalonians 3:10). He tells them, Christ cannot come except there be a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition (2 Thessalonians 2:3–10).

Both these things could have happened, and have happened, really. A falling away, well, after the time of the apostles, in the early church, there was a falling away into the medieval church, with its darkness and superstition. Then came the Reformation, and there was another falling away after the Reformation. We could say today, there’s a terrible falling away, and the love of many has grown cold. People are very worldly, and sensual, and devilish, really. And the man of sin be revealed?—well, the antichrist, the man of sin, the pope of Rome has been, down through the centuries, one who has set himself up in the temple of God, as if he was God; claiming power to forgive sin, and all sorts of this that belong only to God; claiming to be the head of the church,

whereas, there's only one Head, and that is Christ. That man of sin, that antichrist has been revealed.

But there is one thing that still hasn't happened—one thing that's prophesied in the Scriptures. In Romans chapter 11, we're told that one day, the Jews are going to be converted. The Jews, who for the last 2,000 years have largely been blinded, following their own empty traditions, rejecting Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. One day they're going to be converted. In some ways, we think that it could be very near. They have now returned to their own land, and they have prospered in their own land, despite all the opposition that there is against them. But we're still waiting for their spiritual eyes to be opened. The majority of them are in unbelief.

There are some great promises in the Old Testament. For example, Psalm 72, "Yea, all the mighty kings on earth before him down shall fall; And all the nations of the world do service to him shall" (verse 11, SMV¹). Well, that's never happened up to now. "All nations whom thou mad'st shall come and worship reverently"—Psalm 86 (verse 9, SMV). That hasn't happened. There are these prophecies of a time before the end of the world when the nations shall come and bow the knee to King Jesus; not just a tiny minority in the nations, as has happened up till now. Also, Revelation chapter 20 speaks of Satan being bound for a thousand years. That has not happened—bound so that he will deceive the nations no more till the thousand years be fulfilled. Well, Satan's been busy deceiving the nations. He's deceiving men and women with Roman Catholicism, with Islam, with liberal Protestantism. He's deceiving the nations with evolution, with all kinds of false religion, with atheism, and secularism today. Satan's been busy deceiving the nations. But we're told that one day, he will be bound so that he can deceive the nations no more, and during that time, the church of God will flourish.

So, we believe that there's still some time till Christ will return. But watch and pray. It's our duty to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation (Matthew 26:41). Don't sleep as do others.

And finally, we notice how *We Are to Be Sustained as We Wait for the Return of Christ*—verse 21: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all." This is a great promise; a great benediction—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is grace?—God's unmerited favor; God's blessing; God's salvation. These are the words of John, but they are inspired by the Holy Spirit. We need grace—grace to help in time of need; grace to overcome sin and temptation. Christ earned grace for us on the cross, and that grace be with you. Whatever lies ahead, we do not know. We rise from the Lord's Table, we leave our Communion behind us, we go out into the world, we seek to live in the world, but as we go about our daily work, and as we seek to live as Christians in the world, we have the promise—the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will never leave us nor forsake. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." (Isaiah 43:2). We think of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace, but they had a fourth person with them, the Son of man. The Lord is with us, and will be with us. And we will be kept—"kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5). Keep going, fellow Christian. Keep running the race, fighting the good fight, trusting in the Lord. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.

Let's pray.

We thank thee, Lord for thy goodness to us. We thank thee for the blessings that we enjoy. We thank thee for Communion Season, and for the revelation that we have of the love of the Father, in giving his Son, and the love of the Son, in coming to save us, and the love of the Holy Spirit

1 Scottish Metrical Version.

coming to dwell in our hearts, and to apply redemption to us. We pray, Lord, for thy blessing to be upon us, as we go on from here. Do thou go with us. May we be going along, as it were, arm-in-arm with Christ, trusting in our beloved Savior, leaning upon our Beloved more and more. Lead us, guide us, keep us. Keep us from sinning against thee. Watch over us in all our ways. May our lives be God-glorifying. And grant, O Lord, that one day we will be with Christ in heaven to enjoy him forever. Grant, O Lord, that we would never fall away and bring shame upon thy cause. Pardon us all our sins, for Jesus' sake. Amen.