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JESUS CHRIST: LORD OF THE CHURCH, HOPE OF CHRISTIANS
Rev. 22:12-21; Advent Midweek 2; December 10, 2025

Last Wednesday’s Revelation Reading described the “wailing” that will be heard on Judgment Day, **“Behold, [the Lord] is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of Him”** (1:7). We sang this in Charles Wesley’s hymn, “Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending” (LSB 336.2):

*Ev’ry eye shall now behold Him
Robed in glorious majesty;
Those who set at naught and sold Him,
Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
Deeply wailing, deeply wailing, deeply wailing,
Shall their true Messiah see.*

Text: Public domain

Christ promised, **“Surely I am coming soon.”** All people will see Him on that Day, and there will be no ambivalence by anyone. Jesus will be greeted either with dread-filled fear or hope-filled joy. What Jesus said earlier in tonight’s Revelation Reading is heard either with fear or joy. **“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing My recompense with Me, to repay each one for what he has done.”**

The word “recompence” has two senses: repayment in kind (to get in return what was given) or reward (receive as a gift). Those who cannot enter the Holy City, the New Jerusalem that will come down out of heaven, will be left outside to wail. **“Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood,”** that is, all non-Christians. They will get their recompence, be repaid in kind for the sins they did in this life. They will be “deeply wailing” in anguish.

Christians in the Church will have joy. **“Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.”** Our “reward” of eternal life is a gift from God by faith in Jesus. Christians will have nothing to fear. Our sins are forgiven; we are wearing the white robes of Christ’s righteousness we received in Baptism. We will eat from the tree of life, which is no longer forbidden because Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Eden’s garden.

The Church waits for the final advent of her Lord Jesus Christ full of hope, and it is for good reason. The temptations, trials of life, and persecutions we suffer in this world will be ended, and we will be invited into the joys of heaven that will have no end. The enemies Christ defeated on the cross, which have tormented us in their desperation knowing their doom is coming, we will see destroyed before our eyes. All this will be ours because Jesus Christ is the Lord of the Church.

In the meantime, that Jesus is the Lord of the Church also gives us hope in this world. Jesus is our water of life in this dry desert. When the Israelites were thirsty on their exodus to the promised land, God gave them water to drink. As we travel on our exodus to the promised land of heaven, Jesus is our Water of Life, quenching our thirst in Baptism for the forgiveness of our sins, life, and salvation.

Jesus also gives us hope now through His Word, His testimony and witness through which the Holy Spirit works and sustains our faith. When our sins are pronounced forgiven, they are forgiven. Our wounds and weaknesses are treated with the balm of God's love in Christ that promises we will be delivered from them all. St. Paul encourages us in Romans five: **“Through [our Lord Jesus Christ] we have... obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us”** (Rom 5:2-5).

In our weaknesses, we hunger and thirst for righteousness. Just like God fed the hungry Israelites in the wilderness with manna, bread from heaven which sustained them until they reached the promised land, our Lord gives His own flesh and blood as our food and drink to sustain us now. We have not been left to starve and die because Jesus Christ, the Lord of Church, is with us in His holy Word and Sacraments. God has made us His new creation even as we dwell in the old, fallen creation. We wait with hope for His return in glory to redeem us and this fallen world to make everything very good again.

Prayer is central to our hopeful waiting for the Lord. Some of the Bible's last words are prayers and exhortations to pray as we wait with hopefulness for our Lord's return in glory. We pray for our Lord to come to us. **The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come."** The only way we can pray is by faith, which is worked in us by the Holy Spirit, who prays with us. Have you ever thought about that? If the Holy Spirit, God Himself, is praying for the same things we are, we can be sure that our petitions will be granted. The Church, the Bride of Christ, prays in the Spirit that our Bridegroom will return soon to welcome us into the wedding feast with Him that has no end.

The Church prays based on hearing God's Word. **And let the one who hears say, "Come."** This is a reminder to us how important it is to keep hearing God's Word. The Spirit works through the Word of Christ to keep us in the faith and strengthen our faith, especially when it feels like God is far away and won't help us.

We are nearing the darkest, longest nights of the year. When the darkness of this life seeks to overwhelm us, we need reminding of what Jesus promises. **"Surely I am coming soon."** It is not as though Jesus has ever left us, only that we can't see and touch Him in these days, but Jesus can and does see and touch us and our lives through His holy Word and the Sacrament of His body and blood. The Lord's Supper is foretaste of the feast to come in paradise. We aren't there yet, but Jesus comes to us now and is near to us now in these ways until He comes visibly in glory.

Until then, Jesus Christ remains the Lord of the Church and the Hope of Christians. This is why we add our "Amen" of faith to His promises, trusting that Jesus will keep His promises, especially, **"Surely I am coming soon."** What a glorious day that will be for His Church! All will see Him, but we won't be wailing because we will receive our recompense from Him. Christians will see our Lord and have joy for we will receive our reward by faith in Christ who has forgiven our sins and saved us. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.