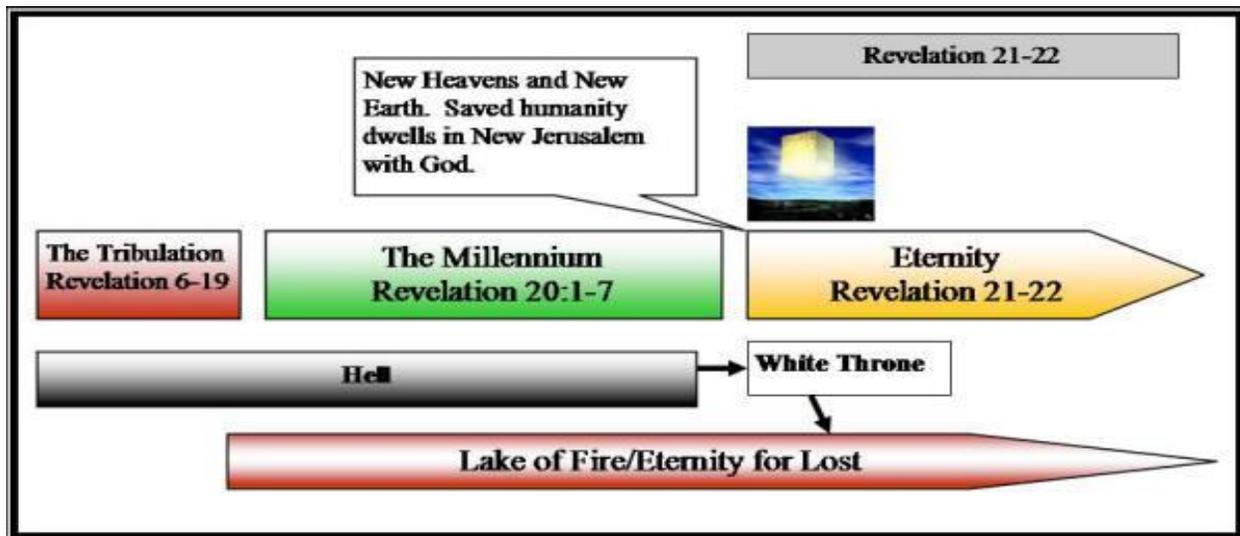


SPIRIT OF LIFE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL
A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION
SESSION 29 – CHAPTER 22

In chapter 21, John is given a preview of the city of the redeemed, the New Jerusalem. The city is of immense proportions containing the saved of all generations. Chapter 22 gives us a peek inside the city, and the incredible relationship between God and man for the rest of eternity.



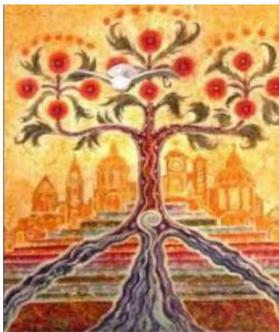
Revelation 22:1-5 *“¹And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ²In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³And 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: ⁴And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. ⁵And 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.*

pure river of water... The source of water from the city is the Throne of God. Jesus promised the woman at the well the water of life. (John 4:10) Water will flow throughout the city. Whether this river will be some sort of canal system throughout the city is not known. The street the river flowed in the middle of was made of pure flawless gold, like all the streets of the city.

from the throne... Water from the throne pictured in Ezekiel 47:1-13 is a foreshadowing of water eternally proceeding from the throne.

John is shown a pure river of water of life. If the Holy City were on earth one might think that this conflicts with the previous chapter, where it says there will be no more sea on the new earth and thus no rain is likely. There is more than one possibility that would allow fulfillment of this passage without any conflict. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this could mean no Mediterranean Sea, or it may mean the new earth may again be one continent. The sea could be outside all land mass as it was before the earth was divided in the days of Peleg (**Gen 10:25, 1Ch 1:19**).

Scripture says there will always be seed time and harvest on the earth so there must be moisture (**Gen 8:22**). It is not likely that there could be rain without evaporation from oceans. God gave the rainbow as an everlasting covenant to all creatures (**Gen 9:16**). If there is no rain, there is no rainbow. Thus, God's everlasting covenant would be broken. If there is rain, this verse could be literally fulfilled on the earth. Although there is a rainbow around the throne of God.



the tree of life... The tree of Life is mentioned three times in both Genesis and Revelation. Because of the fall man lost access to the Tree of Life and was locked out of the Garden. Here in the 22nd chapter man's access to the Tree of Life is restored. It says it is on either side of the river.

This is a very difficult passage to understand. The correct translation is debatable here. I searched many sources, and this is my best guess. The verse might say the tree of life is in the midst of the river plain and extends to both sides of it. The tree is singular like in the Garden of Eden, and it is not likely to be growing on both sides of the river. My opinion is that the tree is in the midst of the river and is sucking up the living water coming from the throne of God and it extends its branches and leaves over both riverbanks. Regardless of where it sits, it is there!

Bare twelve manner of fruits... The translation also should not suggest that the tree bore a different fruit each month. The passage actually says that the tree bears twelve types of fruit and produces fruit each month. (In other words, 12 types of fruit are produced on the tree each and every month).

Leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations... The leaves for the healing of the nations should be translated as *the leaves were for the health (or life) of the nations*.

A different translation of this passage is given below, and it partly supports what I said.

Rev 22: 2 *In the middle of its street. And on this side of the river and on that was the tree of life, having twelve sorts of fruits, giving its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree give life to the nations. (BBE)* (Bible in Basic English version)

This is the same tree of life that was in the midst of the Garden of Eden. This physical manifestation of a spiritual truth will exist eternally to display that continual nourishment for the nations comes from God. The leaves for health represent that the spiritual life of all of God's people comes from the tree He has provided. Since God mentions months in the eternal kingdom, it seems very likely that time of some sort will still exist in the eternal age.

And there shall be no more curse... There will be no more curse in God's creation. We cannot understand what that entails since all we know about the universe has been since it was under the curse. I expect this will mean that the second law of thermodynamics will no longer be with us. There will be no entropy (a function of thermodynamic variables, as temperature or pressure) in God's new or renovated creation. All that is physically manifested in this universe will be made better or stay constant. For mankind this means creativity with no death or decay. The eternal job of those who live in the Holy City will be to assist God in His creation.

throne of God and of the Lamb... The curse of the fall resulted in both death and sin. The redemption of Man by the death of Christ restored man's relationship. Prior to the fall Adam and Eve walked in the garden with God. They had a personal relationship; this was broken at the fall. Here we see the relationship restored. The curse is gone; God sits on the throne with man dwelling in his midst. Man again, has a personal relationship with God. The Throne is complete as we see both the Father and Son sitting on the Throne. For the rest of eternity, God will be all in all.

I Corinthians 15:25-28 *25For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. 27For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.*

See His face... As in the garden man saw the face of God, here again, we shall see the face of God and live. **I John 3:2** *²Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

They shall reign forever... The New Jerusalem will be the capital city of the New Earth and Universe. What does it mean to reign? What kind of work will there be in eternity? There can be all types of speculation about eternity. However, here we are only given a sneak preview of what is to come. Whatever the work and function of the Redeemed for the rest of eternity is, it will be better than we can ever expect. The relationship is an eternal relationship with the redeemed in some sort of overseeing capacity over the new creation.

If they are going to reign with Him for eternity in the Holy City there must be people to reign over. This should make it clear that not all alive in eternity will live in the Holy City. The mystery we need to solve is whom do the people in the Holy City reign over? It cannot be those cast into the Lake of Fire because scripture says that they will not even come to mind anymore. It cannot be Israel because the whole commonwealth of Israel are those that reign with Jesus. This allows for only one possibility: They reign over the children of God born after the bride of Christ marries Jesus.

No one speaks about what happens to the people born during the millennium who do not follow Satan at his last revolt. We must assume that in this dispensation there will also be saved people as there were in every other dispensation of time. After all, the prime reason for the millennial kingdom is to create conditions on earth where many people could be born and saved. It is simply not sound reasoning to think that everyone on earth came against Jerusalem in this last revolt and that fire came down and consumed believer and unbelievers alike.

To help the reader comprehend what one commentator says, he puts it all together in the following timeline:

- God creates Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as immortals to populate His creation, but they are deceived by Satan. By their disobedience, they brought sin and death into the world and had to be cast out of the garden and out of presence of God because God is holy. He cannot dwell among sin. *Adam and Eve died in their sins and the only hope they ever will have for fellowship with God again is if they trust God Himself to provide a way of atonement for their sins. This is also true for all their offspring.*
- God through the seed of the woman (virgin birth of Jesus) sends a second Adam (His Son Jesus) for the earth. This last Adam did not sin. Jesus took upon Himself the penalty of sin that separated man from God by his sacrificial death on the cross. By the first Adam's disobedience sin came into the world and by the last Adam's obedience to the cross sin was paid for. All who by faith trust that the Creator loved man enough to shed His blood and die for the sins of mankind and believe that He has the power to raise Himself up into a new creation where there is no sin or death, will rule and reign with Him in this new creation as kings and priests.
- The people of faith that believe are the Eve for this second Adam (Jesus). They are also called the bride of Christ. Since they will be married to the Son of God, their destiny is to rule and reign with Him from the Holy City (the new Garden of Eden) for eternity.

- They are raised as immortal beings with Jesus and are made into His likeness and the likeness of angels. Six thousand years may be allotted to complete the bride and then the marriage occurs. *Their first assignment after the marriage will be to rule and reign with Jesus on the earth for 1,000 years until they defeat all the enemies of God with the last enemy being death.* Thus, they make it possible for God's plan for mankind to have dominion over his creation to be fulfilled.
- Satan, death, hell, and all enemies of God are then cast into the Lake of Fire.
- The souls that are born after the bride is completed and who eat of the tree of life, put on spiritual immortality like new Adams and Eves in the restoration. These people will become immortal, but they cannot become part of the already married wife of the Son of God. Those in the body of Christ are one with Jesus (*the two will become one flesh - I speak of Christ and the Church - Eph 5: 31,32*). Consequently, those in the body of Christ will be made in the likeness of the risen Savior. They will be made in the nature of angels that they are destined to replace because of the fall of Satan with his angels. They will continue to rule and reign with Christ over his creation for eternity from his Holy City.
- Those who are not part in the first resurrection into the Body of Christ but have been born to mankind will no longer physically die since death will be conquered during the thousand-year reign of Christ. Those that believe will not be cast into the Lake of Fire and they will be in the same nature as Adam and Eve existed before the fall of man. They are likely to be subject to all the physical laws of the restored creation. They may produce offspring for eternity as God wills. They will have dominion over His creation and occupy an ever-expanding creation without end. This was God's will for man from the beginning.

This commentator also stated "I hope you do not think I am teaching Mormonism with its demonic deceptions. I am not saying that men will become Gods of their own planets. However, I think even the fallen angels know man was created to replace them and to have dominion over the creation of God and they hate mankind for it. Therefore, do not be surprised that some cults have received twisted truths given to them by these fallen angels." Man was created to love and to be loved by the Creator and to fellowship with Him. Man was made in the image of God, meaning that he would reflect God's will and nature in all his being while having dominion over the works of God's creation.

Certainly, this commentary states that his theory that man reproduces for eternity is conjecture but it is a very good conjecture for an ever-expanding universe. Few others provide any real answers as to why man was created and what man's destiny may be.

What most believe about man's destiny from the teaching they received from the institutional church is worse than any of my conjecture; it simply is not true. I might add that we will not be hanging out on clouds playing harps. That does not concur with ruling and reigning.

Most think that good people will go to heaven and bad people will go to hell. However, the terms heaven and hell are not even correctly understood by most in Christianity. Many that identify with Christianity do not know that the end place for sinners is the Lake of Fire not Hell (Hades), which is just the temporary abode for the dead.

Heaven is not correctly defined by most either. Heaven is not a place where good people go. There are no good people! Heaven is the Holy City described in this book. It is the dwelling place of the Lamb's wife. It is those washed in the blood of the Lamb that attained the first resurrection. Heaven is the city of the redeemed of the Lord that were washed clean of their sin by believing in His righteousness and His blood sacrifice. When people are not given answers or are given answers that make no sense they will look elsewhere.

Since much of the Church has given no rational answers to valid questions about eternity, some find answers that makes more sense to them in the cults.

Revelation 22:6-11: 6 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. 7Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. 8And 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. 9Then saith he unto me, see thou do it not: for I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God. 10And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand. 11He 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.

These sayings are faithful and true... Everything that God gives shows his faithfulness to us. He is the faithful and true one that we can trust eternally. Rev. **19:11** tells us that Jesus is called Faithful and True.

Behold I come quickly Jesus' return is sooner than the skeptical world thinks. Those who put off the decision of Christ do not know the day they will leave this earth. For them, the time is at hand. Peter wrote about the skeptics of this earth in the latter days.

The angel leaves no doubt that these things will happen. He says they will take place soon. In fact, the future events started happening when John sent his letter to the churches in Asia. This entire book is Jesus being unveiled in His creation over time. After Jesus removes His Church,

we see Jesus cleansing the earth with judgment. Then He fulfills the promise of a Messiah to the nation of Israel. Finally, in this last chapter we see Jesus in His creation in eternity.

Jesus says He comes quickly, and some have misunderstood this to mean that He will come back in the generation it was spoken. *The word in Greek actually means that He is coming suddenly.* The angel was sent to show His servants (the Church) the things that must shortly be done. This prophecy actually started with the seven churches of John's time. It continues to be mostly about the Church age on earth until the Church is completed at the marriage in Heaven. Then the focus is on Israel.

Jesus also tells us here that those who keep the sayings of the prophecy of this book are blessed. Yet, there are many in the Church that have taught, and still continue to teach that this book cannot be understood by laymen. Some have even taught that this is a sealed book. There are many more who will not teach this book.

2 Peter 3:2: ***²that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, ³knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts.***

keeps the sayings of the prophecy.... Revelation 1:3 promises blessing to those who read, hear and keep the words of this prophecy. This promise is reiterated for the reader of the special position this book holds by Jesus Himself. We must remember Jesus encourages us to keep the words of this book. This book is about decision not about fear, about God's promise of blessing and wrath.

Notice also that the angel tells John that the book is a prophecy. Prophecies from God are truths that will happen. *All prophecies in the Bible that have already been fulfilled were fulfilled in a literal common-sense way.* There is absolutely no reason to think otherwise here, just because some things written in this book are hard to understand or difficult for some to accept.

All scripture should be taken in a common literal reading unless the passage itself makes it clear that it is to be taken otherwise. This is also true with all intelligent communication in the world. If people allegorized and spiritualized what was to be taken as literal without good reason from the communicator, they would never get the message and they would be categorized as people that are out of touch with reality.

Some say that a literal common-sense reading does not allow for symbolism and metaphors. That is never true; symbolism and metaphors are common sense tools of any language. *However, when an author uses these tools, it is clear that he also gives the reader the means to get the real message.* Revelation does use such literary tools but when used they are clearly defined from the author of all scripture. The meaning will be found in scripture and the

meaning will be clear. Literary tools used in Revelation should not be defined through suppositions that theologians made using denominational theology as the key to understanding the text. Furthermore, a common-sense literal reading uses literary devices, but it never assumes the intent of the communication is not to be literally understood.

Those who say Revelation is all allegory do away with the clear prophecy and the author's intent. These make John's words to be exercises in interpretation by theology and ideology that today allows most in Christianity to claim that the details in Revelation describe the spiritual battle between good and evil. John never ever implies such an idea! Any plain reading of the text would never produce such an idea!

All this supposition was passed down through theologians who never understood the unfulfilled prophetic scriptures. Because of their supersession theology with the belief that the church replaced Israel, their minds were so far removed from what the passages actually said, they had to make the passages mystical.

Many have taken the words of the prophecy of this book and have violated the intent of why God gave it. They should hear the words of Peter. **2 Peter 1:20** ***"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."***

Those who allegorize this prophetic book and other bible prophecies according to their theology, not only do not get the common message but they have prevented many others from ever getting it.

I fell down to worship... John is again overwhelmed by what he sees and falls before an angel for a second time. (**Revelation 19:10**) He is again rebuked by the angel and reminded that he is just a fellow servant, a co-laborer.

Worship God... You would think that John would have gotten the message when the other angel rebuked him for falling to worship him. It should be apparent that angels appear as if they were gods to men, as does Satan. In any case, it is clear that angels are not to be worshiped and righteous ones do not even want to be worshiped. Angels in scripture are never feminine, never cute and are never to be idolized; they are powerful servants of God who carry out His will. The angel in this passage calls anyone who keeps the sayings of this book a fellow servant. That is quite an honor for people of flesh. What a destiny the redeemed of the Lord have!

Do not seal the words ... Again, we are told this book is a prophecy. John is told not to seal it because the future things written in it started with the letters to the seven churches in Asia. Some of these things written to the seven churches actually did begin in John's lifetime. Daniel's prophecies tell about this period and more but it is a sealed book. It is sealed, because Daniel's prophecy is primarily about Israel and how the Gentile nations interact with Israel.

Up until now, Israel has been in darkness and she will not receive light to unseal the prophecies of Daniel until she finds herself in the middle of the prophecies of that book in the last days.

The book of Revelation is written to those who are in spiritual light. The passages for those in the light cannot be sealed. The book is only sealed to those who live in spiritual darkness. Those in Christianity who say Revelation is a sealed book or that it cannot be understood are in darkness. The seven thunders are sealed in this book, but the thunders are just prior to God's wrath and therefore the Church and Satan has no need to know what they announce.

He that is unjust let him be unjust still... This verse indicates the giving of this prophecy will not change the hearts of the people. This disputes those who say these things become self-fulfilling prophecies.

REVELATION 22:12-17: *12And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14Blessed 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. 15For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. 16I 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. 17And 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.*

When Jesus comes suddenly (quickly) all the judgments and rewards written in this book will take place because He is Almighty God the Creator of all things. He is the beginner and finisher of all things.

My reward is with Me... Some downplay the idea of seeking a reward. Rewarding a faithful life is an incentive initiated at by the Lord. Close to the completion of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, Jesus reminds the reader, He is coming quickly. We are to be working for Him with the reward in mind. The concept of the reward for faithful service is repeated throughout the scripture. The rewards come in several forms, here might be some variables.

- Greater responsibility in the Millennium
- A glorious, resurrected body
- Greater estate in New Jerusalem
- Greater access throughout the New Heavens and Earth

Every man according... Our reward will be according to our work. This is not salvation but reward. (1 Corinthians 3:9-16, Romans 14:10, 2 Corinthians 5:10-11)

Revelation 22:13: *13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.* Jesus repeats what he said in **Revelation 1:11**

Blessed are those... The last of the seven beatitudes of the Book of Revelation (Revelation 1:3,14:13, 16:15, 19:9, 20:6, 22:7). Only the saved will enter the city, our salvation comes from our faith in Christ and faith in Christ is obedience to God.

John 6:28-29: *28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."*

The right to the tree of life... This right belongs to the saved living in New Jerusalem. The eternal commandments are fulfilled in loving God and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Keeping these two commandments fulfill all the other commandments of God. Those who do so will be allowed access to the tree of life in the Holy City so they can eat of it and have spiritual life forever.

The truth of the matter is - you cannot love God if you reject His Son and you cannot in truth love your neighbor without the Spirit that is given by the Son. Therefore, keeping the commandments can only be fulfilled by the Spirit of Jesus Christ in you.

Outside are dogs... The lost that are in the lake of fire will never gain access for the rest of eternity. This is a stern warning to those who think that one day regardless they will see God, but without faith in Christ. These will not have access to the Holy City or access to the tree of life. They will be in an eternal state of death (separation from God).

In the churches... This is the first time the church is mentioned since Revelation chapter 4. The church was raptured in the fourth chapter. What was "Left Behind" was the apostate church later to be merged in the religion of the false prophet.

Jesus is the one who sent the angel to John to tell the Church about these things. He says he came from the lineage of David and that He is the bright and morning star (the light of the world the first light to shine that indicates that the night is over).

the Spirit and the bride say Come"... The invitation for an eternal relationship is open to all those who are hungry and seeking.

Isaiah 55:1-2 *"1 Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. 2 Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance."*

Jesus in John 4 knew the woman was thirsty, thirsty for real life. For this reason, she jumped at the offer to drink the water of life. Here in Revelation 22, the Holy Spirit, and the Redeemed call out to those seeking the meaning of life to come to the Lamb and drink eternal water.

The first part of the verse where the Spirit and the bride says, "come" may be asking Jesus to hasten His return to earth. The Spirit and the bride in effect says we are ready for you Jesus, come to earth. I suppose the Spirit and the bride could also be asking people to come to drink but since there is another "come" later in the verse for the thirsty it would appear to be redundant. Since the Spirit and the Bride would say both things. You cannot go wrong with either viewpoint. In any case, it is clear the rest of the verse is directed at those that are thirsty. We are told the water of life is given freely to all that are thirsty for Him (Jesus). The words whosoever will seems to indicate that mankind has free will of choice to come to Jesus to be saved or not.

Revelation 22:18-19: 18 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: 19 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.

If any man shall take away from the words of the book... God takes the prophetic message He gave to John seriously. Any who add to the words of this prophecy will receive the plagues written in this book and those that take away the words of this prophecy will be cast into the Lake of Fire. That warning has kept many from tampering with the text, but it probably has a deeper prophetic meaning as well.

Revelation 22:20-21: "20 He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. 21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."

The final words of the book tell us that Jesus will come suddenly. We should all be *watching and waiting* for His return. The time set by the Father for the bride to be completed is getting very short. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all!

Mat 24:42 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

Mat 24:43 But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.