

# "Like a Thief in the Night"

## Sane and Sensible Perspectives on the Last Days

There is an immense amount of confusion swirling around this passage, partly because of the mix of metaphors. The action of the Enemy is described by Jesus as that of a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy, yet the action of Jesus seems to be compared to that of a thief in this passage.<sup>1</sup> Well, which is it? Will the real "thief" of this passage please stand up? And may the real victims of the "thievery" show yourselves! Here's a hint: read this rightly and you will WANT to be left behind.



**1 Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers, you have no need to have anything written to you. 2 For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. 3 While people are saying, "There is peace and security," then sudden destruction will come upon them as labor pains come upon a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. 4 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. 5 For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness. 6 So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. 7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, are drunk at night. 8 But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:1-8 ESV**

## Is Jesus a Thief?

If the question is, "Is Jesus a thief?", then the answer has to be no. When Paul states that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, he specifically includes thieves on the list.<sup>2</sup> Jesus is no thief. He doesn't steal things or people away. He never violates free will and always respects legal rights, even when we might wish He wouldn't. The confusion comes through this passage comparing "the day of the Lord" (not Jesus) to the action of a thief at night. People sleeping in the dark may think that they are safe and secure, but a thief steals in just the same. Suddenly, they are caught in a trap and lose everything they valued.

To extend the image rightly, we should see that this is a warning against "sleeping" and "being in the dark" about the coming Day of the Lord. Such people will be caught napping, not thinking they are in any danger at all. Then, without warning, the Day will suddenly be upon them and it will be too late. They will be caught in the trap of their own rebellion and disregard of the Lord. The true thief, Satan, will have lulled them to sleep, then robbed them of their chance at salvation and eternal life with Jesus. The destruction of their lives and their souls will be upon them and it will be too late to repent. Jesus isn't the thief here. The devil is. He is the one who



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comes to steal, kill and destroy. This passage identifies the exact time when the lost lose everything, when they are lost without remedy.

But what about us? Will Jesus or the Day of the Lord be coming for us like a thief? Not at all. Paul declares that believers are “children of the light, children of the day.” Even better, he says that “that day”—the Day of the Lord—will not surprise us like a thief.” What? Wasn’t there a movie years ago called “The Thief in the Night” which portrayed Christians as being utterly surprised by the End Times events? What about the “Left Behind” series? Well, we can’t expect Hollywood to get it right. The Bible in this passage alone (but please read the others too) states very plainly that we who believe will not be in the dark or taken by surprise. The thief in the night is coming for the unbelievers, not us!

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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



## Scriptures and Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10 ESV

<sup>2</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 2 Corinthians 6:9-10 ESV

