

A Thief in the Night

Revelation 16:15,18,19 Jesus said, "Behold, I come as a thief ... and there was a great earthquake ... the cities of the nations fell ... every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

1 Thessalonians 5:2 Paul wrote, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ... then sudden destruction cometh ... and they shall not escape."

2 Peter 3:10 Peter wrote, "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt ... the earth also ... shall be burned up."

The Teaching of Jesus Christ in Matthew 24

24:27 "As the lightning cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." The Greek word used here for "coming" is Parousia, which refers to *the second coming of Jesus Christ*.

24:30,31 "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and *they shall see* the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

24:37-40 What about those not gathered? In Noah's day they "knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming [Parousia] of the Son of man be. *Then* [at the Parousia] shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left." Those gathered will be "taken" to heaven. Those "left" will experience a fate similar to those outside the ark in the days of Noah. "The flood came and destroyed them all ... even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:27,30.

24:42-44 Jesus then compares his second coming, *the Parousia*, to the sudden arrival of a "thief." Believers are urged to "watch" and "be ready."

The Parallel Teaching of Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4 & 5

4:15 Paul also describes *this same* "coming [Parousia] of the Lord."

4:16,17 Jesus will return "with a shout ... voice ... the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise ... Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air." *

5:2,3 What will happen to those who are not "caught up"? Paul continues, "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night ... then sudden destruction cometh upon them ... *and they shall not escape* [as in Noah's day]."

5:4,5 "But *you*, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake *you* as a thief." Here Paul clearly teaches that the return of Jesus is like "a thief in the night" to those who are "of the night" and unprepared! See also Revelation 3:3. True believers will not be "overtaken" and surprised.

5:6 As in Matthew 24:42-44, true believers are urged to "watch and be sober."

* For further study, see the "1000 Years and the Lake of Fire" Study Guide.

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