

Thief in The Night

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The arrival of The Day of the Lord is compared to the suddenness of a thief breaking into someone's house during the night (1Thes. 5:2; 2Pet. 3:10). However, the scriptures dealing with this subject are not limited to just one point in time because The Day of the Lord is a phrase describing God's judgment, which began when Jesus Christ fulfilled his commission to die for the sins of this present evil age (Jn. 1:29; Gal. 1:3-4). Having shed his blood to cleanse/remove the sins of repentant sinners, judgment commenced with those in God's true church.

*For **the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God**; and if **it begins with us first**, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? (1Pet. 4:17; emphasis added; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).*

Even prior to his death, Christ was warning people about the judgment that will come for every generation of mankind.

*And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words (Christ's disciples), when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. ¹⁵Assuredly, I say to you, **it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!** (Mt. 10:14-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

As judgment began with God's true church after Christ's death, "The Day of the Lord" is ongoing right now for everyone who has repented of sin, been baptized, and received God's Holy Spirit.

Following this period of judgment, those who have faithfully served God will be in the first resurrection. This resurrection will occur when Jesus Christ returns to rule this earth (Ac. 1:911; Rev. 20:6).

*And you (Christ's faithful servants) will be hated by all for my name's sake. But **he who endures to the end will be saved** (Mt. 10:22; cf. 24:13; Ed. note in parenthesis).*

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward **those who are Christ's at his coming** (1Cor. 15:22-23; emphasis added).*

In contrast, those who lived in cities like Sodom and Gomorrah will come up in a second resurrection, which will be their "Day of the Lord", or judgment. However, this will not occur until the end of Christ's millennial rule on earth (Rev. 20:5).

Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to the grave; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, Sodom would have continued until this day (because they would have repented). ²⁴But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you (Mt. 11:21-24; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The Day of the Lord will also come to the fallen angels, who were "plundered" by the "strong

man” known as Satan. The timing of this is disputed, but one section of scripture indicates it will occur after Jesus Christ restrains Satan for a thousand years.

*How can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his goods, **unless he first binds the strong man?** And then he will plunder his house (Mt. 12:29; emphasis added).*

This binding of the “strong man” is described in the following scripture, and the timing is just before Christ begins his one-thousand-year rule on earth.

*Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. ²He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and **bound him for a thousand years** (Rev. 20:1-2; emphasis added).*

After Satan is bound, Christ will begin dealing with those Satan had previously “plundered” without permission from God. As Matthew 12:22-29 is primarily dealing with Satan and his demons, it is clear “the strong man” is referring to Satan who was the thief who plundered a third of God’s angels. Following his return to rule this earth, Christ will take the demons out of Satan’s house as part of their rehabilitation, with the goal of restoring their relationship with Almighty God,

(Satan’s) tail (lies; cf. Isa. 9:15) drew a third of the angels of heaven and threw them to the earth... (Rev. 12:4a; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ compared himself to a door through which people and angels can enter in order to understand God’s truth. However, anyone who pretends to understand God’s truth, but lies

about it, will assume the responsibility for leading people and angels astray.

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, **the same is a thief and a robber** (Jn. 10:1; emphasis added).*

*I (Christ) am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. ¹⁰**The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...** (Jn. 10:9-10a; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

So the Day of the Lord will come upon the fallen angels like a thief in the night, even though it will be at a different time from those in the first resurrection, and apparently just before the second resurrection occurs (Rev. 20:7-9). In the unlikely event that some people or angels refuse to repent of their sins during the period of the second resurrection, the Day of the Lord will come suddenly in the form of a complete dissolution of everything that is currently physical,

*But the Day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which **the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be laid bare** (2Pet. 3:10; emphasis added).*

According to God’s law, thieves can be destroyed if they enter a house at night, but not during the daytime.

If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed. ³(But) if the sun has risen on him,

there shall be guilt for his bloodshed (Ex. 22:23a; Ed. note in parenthesis).

From a spiritual perspective, Christ confirmed it is still daytime. Therefore, Satan "the thief" cannot be extinguished yet.

*I must work the works of Him who sent me **while it is day**; the night is coming when no one can work (Jn. 9:4; emphasis added).*

*Then Jesus said to them, "**A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light**, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going." (Jn. 12:35; emphasis added)*

However, in the future, a deep darkness of Satan's own making will occur, and Christ will deal with him at that time in accordance with God's law.

*For behold, the **darkness shall cover the earth, and deep darkness the people** (Isa. 60:2a; emphasis added).*

*Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in My holy mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble; for the day of the Lord is coming, for it is at hand; ²**A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and **thick darkness****... (Joel 2:1-2a; emphasis added).*

It is at this future time of great darkness, which represents Satan's deceptions, that Christ will command his army to take down Satan and any who are foolish enough to follow him.

*The earth quakes before them (Satan and his followers), the heavens tremble; **the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness**. ¹¹The Lord gives voice before His army, for His camp is very great; for strong*

is the One who executes His word. For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; who can endure it? (Joel 2:10-11; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

*Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord! For what good is the day of the Lord to you? **It will be darkness, and not light** (Amos 5:18; cf. Jer. 17:16-18; emphasis added).*

*Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison (Rev. 20:1-2) ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog (Eze. 38:1-23; 39:1-20), to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And **fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them** (Rev. 20:7-9; cf. Zech. 5:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).*

*You (Satan) defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities, by the iniquity of your trading; therefore **I brought fire from your midst; it devoured you, and I turned you to ashes upon the earth** (Eze. 28:18; cf. Rom. 16:20; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

Just as many prophecies in the Old Testament describe the judgment of fallen angels; so too are many prophecies in the book of Revelation. It is hard to believe the horrific disasters in the book of Revelation pertain primarily to human beings. If the context of these is examined carefully, it should be apparent they are describing battles between Satan's forces and the army of God.

*And I (John) saw three unclean spirits like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. ¹⁴For **they are spirits of demons**, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty (Rev. 16:13-14; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).*

As we saw earlier, Satan is a thief who stole a third of God's angels by lying to them, and according to God's law he is to forfeit his life.

If a man is found stealing any of his brethren and mistreats them, that kidnapper shall die; and you shall put away the evil person from among you (Dt. 24:7).

Jesus Christ promised his disciples that Satan's judgment will occur.

(Regarding) judgment, the ruler of this world is judged (Jn. 16:11; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Anyone's life can come to an end suddenly and unexpectedly, regardless of whether they will be in the first or second resurrection (Eccl. 9:11). Therefore, the phrase "a thief in the night" is not limited to just one specific point in time. This same principle applies to the phrase "the Day of the Lord" because its primary function is dealing with God's judgement for sins committed, and some are experiencing the Day of the Lord right now, while others will not experience it until the second resurrection at the end of Christ's millennial rule on this earth. However, those who have repented of their sins, and been baptized, do not need to fear "the Day of the Lord" providing they continue to trust and obey God throughout their physical lifetime.

Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (Lk. 12:32; cf. Mt. 10:28).

For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night (1Thes. 5:2)

But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day (of the Lord) should overtake you as a thief. ⁵You are all sons of light and sons of day. We are not of the night, nor of darkness (1Thes. 5:4-5; Ed. note in parenthesis).

For God did not appoint us to punishment, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁰who died for us, that whether we are alive or dead, we should live together with him (at the 1st resurrection; cf. 2Thes. 1:7, 10) (1Thes. 5:9-10; Ed. note in parenthesis).

In conclusion, Satan is not only a thief who steals those who belong to Almighty God, he also murders them (Jn. 8:44). He achieves this by encouraging people to rely on their own reasoning, rather than trusting and obeying God's word (Prov. 3:5). By ignoring God's word, mankind transgresses His law and commandments which leads them to sin and death (Rom. 6:23). Thankfully, because the return of Jesus Christ will be sudden and unexpected, Satan will be caught off guard and his reign as "king of thieves" will come to an end. Once this occurs, Jesus Christ will begin reconstructing and reeducating everyone who is still alive.

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