

He Came As A Thief

1 Thess 5:1-4

5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh *as a thief in the night*.

3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then *sudden destruction cometh upon them*, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

4 But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief .

KJV

The scripture quoted above is a continuation of a flow of thought that begins in 1 Thes. 4.

Chapter four discusses the resurrection (many interpret as the rapture) and chapter five, a sudden destruction (the tribulation).

The purpose of this writing is to place the two events in their proper setting. Most teaching on the subject of the rapture is usually confined to the fourth chapter. Since there is no historical evidence of an event of this nature ever happening, it is relegated, by many, to a future one.

Other scriptural evidence undeniably links the coming of the Lord with the destruction of Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead. These passages are no exception. The term **“thief in the night”** and **“day of the Lord”** are used by Jesus and the Apostles and definitely connects the two events. Let us take a look at how these phrases are used the word.

Matt 24:33-44

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at **the doors.**

James understood the times he was living in. He declared, “the coming of the Lord was nigh.” He further stated the judge (Jesus) **was at the door**. The language is obviously intended to draw the reader to the conclusion that James was sounding the alarm. The time of the Lords` wrath was very near! This is in perfect agreement with the Lords` admonition in Matt.24. The Church would recognize these “things” itemized in that chapter.

And the time of His coming would be at” **the doors.**”

James 5:8-9

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, **the judge standeth before the door**

34 Verily I say unto you, ***This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.***

What things? That was a mouthful. Read the first 32 verses of Mathew 24 and you have the destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem and the social upheaval in Judea (wars, rumors of wars, famine, earthquakes etc.)

Once we identify the “THINGS” Jesus referred to, then it is a simple task to know in what generation they were fulfilled. In Matt.23 Jesus identifies the house he condemns. Once it was Gods house. Jesus declared it was now “your house”. He also identifies the “generation” to receive judgment, that is, his contemporaries.

Matthew 23:36-38

36 Verily I say unto you, **All these things shall come upon this generation.**

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, **your house** is left unto you desolate.

Jesus preached that the “**things**” he mentioned would indicate the nearness of his coming, not the exact day or hour. He declared the suddenss of this destruction would be very much like Noahs flood. They were not aware of the judgment until it was suddenly upon them.

As we continue in our study, Mathew 24 addresses the suddness of his coming with the flood of Noah.

As in the time of Noah, they would not know the time of their visitation.

Luke 19:43-44

**43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,
44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation .**

KJV

The “goodman of the house” is Israel. The usage of the word “thief” in this passage is a powerful reminder of other scriptures which describe the total

surprise this judgment evokes. Jesus declares in verse 44 that these events are **the coming of the Son of man!**

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But ***of that day and hour knoweth no man***, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And **knew not** until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

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

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.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not ***the Son of man cometh.***

In Mathew 24 they were warned the destruction of the Temple (vs.2) and the resurrection (vs.31) were events that no one could predict. It would come upon them suddenly, as a thief would enter a house, without warning. Noah and his generation “knew not” until the flood took them all away.

All of this was to be accomplished in that generation.

The destruction was to be accomplished by Jesus himself. Revelation 16:15 positively identifies Jesus coming as a thief to bring the wrath of God.

Rev 16:15

15 Behold, **I come as a thief** . Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

Luke 12:39-40

39 And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 **Be ye therefore ready** also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

Coming Quickly, one day is with the lord as one thousand years

2 Peter 3:8-10

8 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9 **The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.** He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

2 Peter 3:3-12

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come **in the last days** scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

4 And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But 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 with fervent heat, **the earth also and the works** that are therein shall be burned up.

11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

12 Looking for and hasting **unto the coming of the day of God**, wherein **the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?**

I could go on to identify what is dissolved and what are the “elements” we have referred to but time will not allow for that at this time. I have written an article on this subject entitled, “The Elements Destroyed” on our web site.

http://www.fulfilledprophecy.net/pdf/Elements_Destroyed.pdf

It should clear up any questions you might have.