

When we think of discipline, order, and protection, our minds often turn to soldiers. We admire the structure of a military parade or the courage of police officers risking their lives to uphold justice. Their training, sacrifice, and sense of duty inspire many.

But no one celebrates a thief. Thieves are despised because they invade the lives of others, taking what doesn't belong to them often in secrecy and violence. Their actions violate trust and destroy peace.

And yet, **Scripture tells us that Jesus will return not like a soldier on parade, but like a thief in the night** swift, unexpected, and silent.

1 Thessalonians 5:2 (ESV)

"For you yourselves are fully aware that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night."

Jesus Himself used this imagery:

Matthew 24:43-44 (NKJV)

*"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into.
Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

Why a Thief? Because He Comes for What Is Valuable

A thief doesn't come to steal trash. He targets **what is precious**.

In the same way, **Jesus is returning to take those who are valuable in His sight** His faithful ones, those who have been redeemed by His blood, purified by repentance, and made holy by the Spirit.

Malachi 3:17 (NKJV)

*"They shall be Mine," says the Lord of hosts,
"On the day that I make them My jewels.
And I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves
him."*

The world is like a large house some inside are faithful and others are not. The ruler of this fallen world is Satan (John 14:30), and his kingdom is full of deception and wickedness. But Jesus is coming to claim His jewels the saints and He will do it in a moment, without warning.

The Rapture: A Holy Extraction

When the Lord comes like a thief, it will be the **rapture** the sudden taking away of believers who are walking in righteousness.

Luke 17:34-36 (NKJV)

"I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left.

Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left.

Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

It will happen in the twinkling of an eye a divine disappearance that will confound the world.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)

"Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed."

Who Are the Valuable Vessels?

In Scripture, **vessels** are often used to describe people some for honorable use, others for dishonorable.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 (ESV)

“Now in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver but also of wood and clay, some for honorable use, some for dishonorable.

Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel for honorable use, set apart as holy, useful to the master of the house, ready for every good work.”

Valuable vessels are those who:

- Have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16)
- Have repented of their sins (Acts 3:19)
- Have been baptized in water **in the name of Jesus** (Acts 2:38)
- Have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9)

They live lives of holiness and obedience, remaining in the light while the rest of the world walks in darkness.

Psalm 16:3 (NKJV)

*"As for the saints who are on the earth,
'They are the excellent ones, in whom is all My delight.'"*

The Aftermath of the Rapture

Once the saints are taken, **those left behind will face the wrath of the Antichrist** during the Great Tribulation a time of unparalleled suffering.

Matthew 24:21 (ESV)

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be."

The enemy will rage, realizing he has lost what is most precious. And like a man who awakens to find his treasures stolen, he will unleash destruction in frustration and fury.

Are You a Vessel of Value?

This is the critical question.

Jesus isn't returning for churchgoers by name, but for **true believers** those who are living in righteousness and walking in the Spirit.

Are you ready? Or will you be among those left behind?

Now is the time to repent, to surrender your life fully to Christ, to walk in holiness, and be filled with His Spirit.

Maranatha The Lord is Coming!

The early church greeted one another with the word **Maranatha**, meaning:

"Our Lord is coming."

So let us live with that urgency, and strive to be vessels of gold holy, ready, and set apart for the Master's use.

HE'S COMING LIKE A THIEF, NOT LIKE A SOLDIER BE A VESSEL
OF VALUE

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