

*Tuesday*

# A Thief in the Night

**Today's Scripture** 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

While Paul had previously taught the Thessalonians about Jesus' return during his visit, they were still worried about it. In chapter four, Paul addresses their worry over dead loved ones. In chapter five, Paul addresses the timing of Jesus' return.

Unlike so many in our modern age, Paul refuses to be lured into a discussion of setting dates for Jesus' return. Instead, Paul tells them that they have "no need to have anything written" about dates or times (5:1). The church already knew that nothing could be known about its timing from Jesus himself (Mark 13:32; Acts 1:7).

So, Paul is not identifying dates. He is describing "how" Christ will return. He does this with two vivid illustrations: 1) a thief who comes at night (vs.2), and 2) the suddenness of labor pains (vs.3). Both illustrate the unpredictability of Jesus' arrival.

Christians are to be "fully aware" of something: the return of Jesus can be known as accurately as the arrival of a thief. As we well know, thieves do not call your house ahead of time to let you know of the time of their arrival.

Paul calls the return of Christ "the day of the Lord." "Day" meant for them, "time" or "event." The phrase "Day of the Lord" describes a final divine intervention.

This day is a disastrous "sudden destruction" for the enemies of God (vs. 3). But for the Christian, Paul says they should not to be surprised but on guard (vss. 4-8). Part of this preparation is to "put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (vs.8). Salvation in the Bible includes forgiveness but also has to do with the broader idea of rescue. Christians ready themselves for God's rescue, whenever it happens.

But our ultimate rescue rests on what God has done for us in the person of Jesus (vss. 9f).

**Today, I will...**encourage specific brothers and sisters in obtaining salvation (vs.11).