

**THIEVES IN OUR MIDST:
WHICH ONE WILL SNATCH YOU AWAY?**

A. The Greek word “HARPAZO” means “to snatch away; to forcibly abduct, tear away”

1. This expresses the idea of forcibly (but covertly) snatching away, as a purse snatcher: one who performs the action so quickly that no one notices it is taking place until it has happened.
2. To understand “harpazo”, we must understand “kleptos”; to understand the “snatching away” we must understand the one who does it. “Harpazo” is always the action of the “kleptos”.
3. The Greek word “kleptos” means “stealer, thief”

B. The “HARPAZO CONCEPT” and the “RESCUE NARRATIVE” are patterns seen in scripture; God’s people enter into Tribulation, but are rescued out of it. There is participation and preparation required on the part of those who are rescued:

1. Lot was “snatched as a brand from the burning” when angels took him to safety, just prior to the fire falling on Sodom; Gen. 19:15-22 (God uses angels and people in His rescue operations).
2. Noah and his family were “rescued” from destruction. They entered the Ark through the door, were “lifted above” the flood waters, and they came to rest upon the mount; Gen. 7:1-16; 8:4
3. The children of Israel were “rescued out of Egypt” and led to safety, when judgment and destruction came upon Pharaoh and his kingdom; Exodus 12:3-42
4. Brides from the daughters of Shiloh who were dancing, celebrating the feast of the Lord, were “snatched and taken” to the land of “Benjamin” (son of the right hand); Judges 21:19-23
5. Elijah fled from Jezebel, performed miracles, and mentored Elisha; he was “translated, taken up” by a whirlwind to heaven when the horses and chariot appeared; 2 Kings 2:1-11
6. Wise virgins, ready to meet the Bridegroom, are “taken” into the Marriage Feast; Matt. 25:10
7. Jesus tells us that “one will be taken, and the other will be left”; Luke 17:34-36
8. Philip went south from Jerusalem to Gaza; he preached the gospel to a eunuch and baptized him. The Spirit of the Lord “caught away” Philip and he was found at Azotus; Acts 8:26-40
9. “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall “snatch them out” of My hand”; John 10:28
10. Faithfulness to the Lord keeps us immune from “satanic abduction”; 2 Timothy 2:26
11. God’s people are instructed to “snatch from the fire” those who waver and doubt; Jude 23
12. The manchild is “snatched” from the dragon and “caught up” to God’s throne; Rev. 12:4-5

C. THIEVES IN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

1. Jesus is coming LIKE a thief in the night; Matthew 24:42-44; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3; 16:15
 - a. Jesus exhorts us to seek His kingdom, to watch, not fear, and be ready; Luke 12:31-40
 - b. The saints will be “caught up”. Those who are not “harpazoed” by Jesus, Who comes LIKE A THIEF (kleptos), will be “harpazoed” by THE THIEF, who is the devil; 1 Thess. 4:16-17
 - c. Those who depart from the faith and wander into apostasy, are the most vulnerable to being snatched by the evil one instead of being “snatched away” (rescued) by the Lord Jesus.
2. The DAY (of the Lord) comes LIKE a thief; in the night; 1 Thessalonians. 5:1-3; 2 Peter 3:10
 - a. When those of the darkness say “peace and safety”, sudden destruction comes upon them.
3. SATAN IS THE THIEF who comes to “harpazo”, to kill and destroy; John 10:10:
 - a. He steals “souls” and the worship that belongs to God alone; 2 Thess. 2:4; Rev. 13:8-16
 - b. The thief “climbs up some other way”; John 10:1, 7-9; 14:6; Is. 14:12-14
 - c. Satan’s “sons of perdition” are doomed and ultimately defeated; John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:3

- 4. The past is being repeated: God’s house has become a “den of thieves”.**
- a. Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers twice during His earthly ministry. The merchants of Babylon are “buying and selling” in God’s house; Matt. 21:12-13; John 2:13-16.
 - b. Jesus will “turn the tables” again; He will expose and overturn the wiles of the con artist and beat Satan at his own game. JESUS WILL “ROB” THE THIEF; He will “outfox the fox”.
- 5. Spiritual valuables must be protected and guarded because of thieves:**
- a. The Philistines (symbolic of demons) and others rob the threshing floors (where grain is harvested); 1 Samuel 23:1-2; Boaz and Gideon guarded the “grain”; Ruth 3:3-7; Judges 6:11
 - b. “Wheat” is gathered and put into the landowner’s “barn” (granary); Matthew 13:30
 - c. Jesus told His Church to “hold fast” to what they have; let no one take your crown; Rev. 3:11
- 6. The “multitudes” tolerate corruption; they are in the company of thieves:**
- a. Isaiah foresaw the coming Babylonian Captivity; he called the people and their leaders “rebels who are companions of thieves”; Isaiah 1:23
 - b. “When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, you associate with adulterers”; Ps. 50:18
 - c. “Therefore they (the multitude) cried out again, saying, Not this Man (Jesus), but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber”; John 18:40. Jesus was crucified between 2 thieves; Lk. 23:32-43
- 7. The Parable of the Sower illustrates the action of the thief; Matthew 13:1-23:**
- a. “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart”; Matthew 13:19
 - b. Our faith in Jesus Christ and His Word can be stolen due to persecution; Matt. 13:21
 - c. Cares of this life, deceitfulness of riches can rob us of true spiritual riches; Matt. 6:19-20
- 8. Truth can be stolen from us; ignorance robs us of knowledge and discernment; 2 Cor. 2:11:**
- a. Apostasy is a departure from biblical truth and doctrine; if we reject the truth, God will send a strong “delusion” (deceit, error); 2 Thess. 2:11; 1 Kings 22:22-23
 - b. In many places “signs and wonders” have been elevated above sound doctrine; Matt. 12:39
 - c. Charismatic witchcraft can masquerade as manifestations of the Holy Spirit; 2 Cor. 11:4
- 9. Hirelings, wolves, false brethren and angels of light have stolen things from God’s house:**
- a. The true exposition of God’s Word has been stolen. Anointed teaching/preaching has been replaced with hype, psychological babble, smooth speech, false doctrine; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 4:3
 - b. Worship in spirit and truth has been replaced by performance and entertainment. They utilize the “foot pumps” of Egypt; the rain of heaven is missing; John 4:23-24; Deut. 11:10-11
 - c. We have been robbed of true music ministry, being replaced by the “music industry” (for profit) with soulful, unscriptural lyrics, “mantras”; Matt. 6:7, and singing that excites the senses.
- 10. Our loyalty and allegiance to Jesus Christ and our identity in Him can be stolen; 2 Cor. 5:17:**
- a. Seduction and spiritual adultery are thieves; God’s people have “other loves”; Rev. 2:4
 - b. Ministries, movements, denominations and individuals can “lord over us”, stealing our allegiance to the Person of Jesus Christ; Matt. 23:8-10; Luke 16:13
- 11. We can be robbed of our rest and contentment in Christ:**
- a. Contentment is a heart at rest in God; discontentment is fueled by comparison; 1 Tim. 6:6
 - b. Worry, anxiety and fear are thieves, robbing us of joy, peace and trust in Christ.
- 12. God uses His people to snatch others from danger and destruction:**
- a. Lot was delivered by Abraham’s “sword” and by intercession; Gen. 14:12-16; 18:22-33
 - b. Sober, watchful saints will warn others; 1 Pet. 4:7; 5:8. Patience, humility and instruction helps to recover those who are “taken captive”, caught in the devil’s snare; 2 Tim. 2:24-26
 - c. The anointing upon us and our “weapons” will “set the captives free”; Lk. 4:18; 2 Cor. 10:4
- Terri Hill

