

THE LIFE THIEF

“The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.” [John 10:10](#)

The contrast that Jesus makes in the 10th Chapter of John is between the Good Shepherd and “the thief.” The Shepherd came to give life in abundance, but the thief comes only to steal, kill, and destroy.

Jesus identifies Himself as the Good Shepherd. Jesus also identifies the thief, but to understand who Jesus identifies, it is important to read [John 9](#) where the discourse originally begins. There is no natural break between chapters 9 and 10 of John, even though there is a chapter numbering break. The true context and flow of what begins in [John 9:39-40](#) and continues through [John 10:1-18](#). Jesus goes from condemning the Pharisees in [John 9](#) and directly into [John 10](#) where Jesus contrasts His leadership with that of the Pharisees.

There are three connected Shepherd parables in Jesus’ teaching in [John 10](#). So all of [John 10:1-18](#) is a single discourse that is a response to the Pharisees’ mistreatment of the blind man in [John 9:39-40](#). Each of the three parables, which Jesus gives, is a direct contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees. Jesus states, “all who came before Me are thieves and robbers... and the thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy.” Jesus does not switch topics as He proceeds into the parables. The overall context moving from [John 9](#) through [John 10:7-10](#) clearly shows that the “thieves” are the Pharisees.

While it is true that Jesus told the Pharisees they were like their father, the devil, it remains that the true context of the identity of the “thief” are the corrupt leaders of Israel. It is also understood that the intent of satan is to kill, steal and destroy, but it is also made clear from Jesus’ teaching in [John 10](#) that for satan to accomplish those nefarious deeds, he must enlist human agents, and those agents Jesus identifies as the Pharisees.

Why is this identity important? Why not just identify the “thief” as satan? Because to just simply state that the “devil comes not but to steal, kill and destroy” leaps over the important fact that for satan to accomplish those deeds, he must have interaction and cooperation with human agents. So, Jesus does not identify the “thief” only as satan, as we so often hear, but rather Jesus identifies the “thief” with the individuals who were corrupt leaders in Israel.

The obvious questions then are, “What does the thief want to steal, who does he want to kill, and what does he want to destroy?” [John 10:10](#) states, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.” Jesus’ contrast between the thief’s objectives and His objective has to do with “life.”

Jesus comes that we might have life (the essence of living) and life more abundantly (the essence of eternal life.) In contrast, then, the thief’s goal is to steal (the quality of life), to kill (the vitality of life), and to destroy (the hope of eternal life).

The thieves, then and now, are the corrupt and blinded individuals who, through false teachings, using the doctrines of devils, steal, kill, and destroy! These are human agents who are the tools of satan who bring death and destruction by stealing the Word of God — much like the parable of the Sower where much of the seed sown was devoured by the fowls of the air. Jesus came in flesh to save, and the thief comes in flesh to steal, kill, and destroy!

Jesus as the Good Shepherd comes that... His sheep hear His voice and follow Him... therefore, His Voice (Word) is the guiding factor that leads to Life. He (Jesus) lays down His Life for the sheep... Calvary makes eternal Life possible. He is the door, the gate, whereby His sheep enter in... Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. All these factors are to be found in the proclamation of [Acts 2:38](#), repent, be baptized in Jesus’ Name, and receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost – for it is only here where we find the way, and the truth, that leads to life.

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