

AT THE MIDNIGHT HOUR

THE WORD “MIDNIGHT” occurs fourteen times in the Bible. It is always associated with some demonstration of the power of God: either in salvation or in judgment.

The Midnight Destroyer

Exodus 12:29 — Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle.

The first time the word “midnight” appears in the Bible is when the Passover feast was first observed in Israel. We all know the story well. God promised to redeem His people from the bondage of Pharaoh (Exodus 6:6). God sent Moses to tell the Pharaoh, “**let my people go**” (Exodus 8:1).

When Pharaoh refused, God brought ten plagues on the land of Egypt. The tenth and worst of the plagues was the death of all the firstborn in Egypt. The night of the first Passover was the night of the tenth plague. On that awful and momentous night, God told the Israelites to sacrifice a spotless lamb and smear their doorposts and lintels with its blood (Exodus 12:21–22).

Then, when the Lord passed through the land, He would “pass over” the households that showed the blood (verse 23). In a very real way, the blood of the lamb saved the Israelites from death. It kept the midnight destroyer from entering their homes. The Israelites were saved from the plague, and their firstborn children were spared death.

The children of Israel in Egypt, by faith followed God’s command and kept the first Passover. However, none of the Egyptians did so. All through Egypt, behind the unmarked, bloodless door entries of the Egyptians, the firstborn children died at midnight (Exodus 12:21–29). A great cry was heard throughout the land of Egypt. There was wailing and gnashing of teeth.

It is called the “Night of Jehovah.” Why? Because judgements commissioned by God were normally carried out by angels, but in this particular text it says, “**Now it came about at midnight that the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.**”

The Lord was the Midnight Destroyer. He, Himself was the destroying angel that sought out the blood that night. On that unforgettable night, the Lord was not looking for Egyptians or Israelites; He was looking for the blood of the Lamb.

Today, The New Testament establishes a relationship between this Passover lamb and Jesus Christ, the true Lamb of God.

Jesus' shed blood does more than cover sins; it removes the sins of those who believe in Him, causing God's judgment to pass over them. Have you believed in Him? As the blood been applied to the door of your heart?

The Midnight Burden-bearer

It was midnight when Samson took the doors and gate-posts of the city of Gaza, and carried them to the top of the hill overlooking the city of Hebron (Judges 16:3).

Samson was repeatedly known for his great physical strength, but also for his moral weakness. Indeed, his life was a clear warning against the dangers of self-indulgence and sinful gratifications.

This act of taking away the massive gate of Gaza, demonstrated that God's power was still at work in Samson's life, despite his unreliability.

You know, Samson was not afraid to enter the citadel of the enemy. The gates of Gaza could not prevail against Him. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not afraid to enter Satan's territory. And the gates of Hell did not prevail over Him.

Believe it or not, Samson carried those massive city doors for about 60 miles, all the way up on a hill, and dropped them there. What a heavy load that must have been and what strength was exerted!

But when we look at Jesus Christ, he carried a wooden cross through the streets of Jerusalem and then up on Calvary's hill. But the weight of the cross was not the crushing burden. The burden Christ bore was the crushing burden of sin and guilt. Not His own but ours.

Isaiah 53:4-5

***Surely He has borne our griefs,
And carried our sorrows;
Yet we esteemed Him stricken,
Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He was wounded for our transgressions,***

***He was bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,
And by His stripes we are healed.***

At the midnight hour, in the garden of Gethsemane, He was bruised and put to grief by the Father.

The Baptist Evangelist, Dr. John R. Rice preached—

Jesus was sorrowful and heavy and His soul “sorrowful even unto death,” that is, was literally dying of grief...Jesus prayed that the cup of death would pass from Him that night so He could live to die on the cross the next day.

God heard and did answer His prayer. This is made clear in Hebrews 5:7 where we are told that Jesus ***“offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared.”***

Christ was the Midnight Burden-bear who bore and carried our sorrows from the Gethsemane all the way to Calvary.

As Christ walked up on Calvary and then hung on the cross, the awful weight of God’s wrath pressed down upon Him. Jesus did not just drop our sins there. By his death, He removed our guilt completely. It’s gone, forever removed from our dossier and God will never hold it against us.

The Midnight Caller

Matt.25:6 ***“And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’***

There will be a generation of Christian believers who will be living when Jesus comes. One moment they will be on earth; the next moment they will be in eternity.

It may be a generation that is living many years from now or it could be this present generation that will experience the first phase of Christ’s coming, when He will remove the Church , His bride (1 Thess 4:16-18). The Lord Jesus could very well come back tonight.

But this text that I want to talk about is not about the rapture, the first phase of His coming. Many interpreters make the mistake thinking it is. The chapter of

the text is about Jesus' return to the earth with his bride. It deals with the second phase of his return.

This Midnight Caller is calling out the bridesmaids. Five of those bridesmaids are called wise virgins and the other five are foolish virgins.

- The 5 wise virgins represent the believers during the Tribulation.
- Their lamps speak of their profession of faith.
- The oil is a type of Holy Spirit.

The five foolish virgins profess to be Christians, but they were never saved. They are void of the Spirit.

V10 goes on to say..... ***When the bridegroom came, and those 5 who were ready went in with Him to the wedding; and the door was shut.***

Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ***'Lord, Lord, open to us!'***¹² But he answered and said, ***'Truly I tell you; I don't know you.'***

The lesson is clear as crystal: Be ready! The Lord can return at any moment. Have your lamps been trimmed and filled with oil? Examine yourselves to see if you are of the faith. Do you have the Holy Spirit living in you?

Whether one finds himself to be in at first phase or in second phase of His coming, the Midnight Caller shouts ***"Behold, the bridegroom cometh."***

The Midnight Pleader

Luke 11:5-8 –

⁵ Then He said to them, ^[a] Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children ^[b] and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.'⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his ^[c] persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

The midnight pleader was “shamelessly persistent” in his request for bread. He would not take no for an answer. He continued to knock and plead, till he was given the three loaves of bread.

Knock, knock, keep knocking on heaven’s door, your request will be met. Persevere in your prayers. God is not like the friend who was asleep and could not be bothered. God does not sleep or slumber. He sympathizes with us and provides when we ask, knock, and seek.

I believe the three loaves are an important part of the parable. We must understand that the church has the Bread of Life that the needy world is looking for. Let us not be lazy, indifferent, or selfish by holding back in giving this precious bread of life to as many as we can.

This Bread of Life can be likened to a unity of three loaves of bread.

- **There is the bread of faith.** The needy world needs faith. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. Give them the bread of faith—God’s word, the truth.
- **There is the bread of hope.** Everyone around us needs encouragement and hope. So many want to give up on life. Give them the bread of hope.
- **There is the bread of love.** The love of many has grown cold. Let not your love grow. You shall love your neighbour as yourself. The whole law of God hinges on that one commandment. Give them the bread of love.

Its midnight within the social order. Its midnight within the psychological order. Its midnight within the moral order. Its midnight within the judicial order. Its midnight within the political order.

And I must say the church is failing at handing out the bread that people so desperately need.

The Midnight Worshipper

It was midnight at Philippi when Paul and Silas sang praises to God in the jail (Acts 16:25-28).

Try to imagine their circumstance. They had been badly beaten. They were thrown into the inner prison—the worst part of the prison. No doubt, it was a smelly, dark, and dismal place. Their feet were shackled, and they were still feeling the pain of their lacerations. Their wounds were still fresh and stained

with dry blood. They knew no physical comfort whatsoever. Moreover, they were surrounded by prisoners who groaned, cursed, and wailed.

But, but, in the “dead of the night”, at the midnight hour, they chose to pray and offer praises to God.

These midnight worshippers seemed to have been acquainted with the verse of Psalm 119:62, which states:

***At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.***

Now, I think they were not praying for deliverance. I think they were praying for God to do something miraculous for the glory of His name and the spiritual salvation of the other inmates.

And why were they praising God when it's sleeping time? I believe they were praising God because they were found worthy to suffer for the great name of JESUS. You see, they never for one moment saw themselves as prisoners of Rome, or Nero, or of the empire. They saw themselves as prisoners of Jesus Christ the Lord.

And while they sang as nightingales in a cage, the other prisoners heard and listened. They were amazed and moved by Paul's and Silas incredible joy. Songs in the night are better than sermons in the daytime.

Paul would later on write to the Philippians and exhort them to rejoice in the Lord, always. We must learn to consider our various trials as pure joy.

Then suddenly, God's power was demonstrated by a violent earthquake which resulted in their freedom, and in the salvation of the Philippian jailer and his household.

The point of the story is obvious. You and I can get our breakthrough at any moment or hour of the day— even at midnight.

You know, there is such a thing as the midnight sun. Inside the Arctic and Antarctic circles the sun is visible at midnight. If you have enough faith and eyes to see, you will see the SON, S-O-N, at the midnight hour, breaking through and shining His light into your darkness.