

Midnight! What Then?

by Ian Paisley

The sermon explores the significance of midnight as a pivotal moment for judgment and the opportunity for salvation through Christ.

Duration: 27:25

Scripture: Genesis 19:17, Genesis 22:1-14, Exodus 12:23-30, Matthew 24:42-44, Matthew 25:6, Luke 13:25-28, Acts 20:7

Topics: "Second Coming", "Spiritual Readiness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the parable of the ten virgins from the Bible. He emphasizes the importance of being prepared and ready for the return of Christ. The five foolish virgins, who did not have enough oil for their lamps, represent those who are unprepared and lacking in faith. The preacher warns against the consequences of not being ready and urges the audience to watch and be prepared for the coming of the Son of Man.

Transcript

You'll find either under your seat or opposite your seat a copy of the authorized version of the Holy Scriptures. Pick it up and turn with me to the Old Testament, to the second book of the Bible, the book of Exodus, reading at chapter 12. The twelfth chapter of the book of Exodus.

It's page 72 in the Bible that's in front of you in the pew. We're going to read from the verses 23 to the verse 30. Verse 23 of Exodus chapter 12.

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians. And when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you. And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever.

And it shall come to pass when ye come to the land which the Lord will give you according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover. He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt.

But he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses. And the people bowed their head and worshipped. And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

And it came to pass that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn of the land of Egypt. From the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up at midnight, he and all his servants, and all the Egyptians.

And there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. Ending our lesson at verse thirty, and God will stamp his own infallible book with his own unchanging blessing. I take the promised Holy Ghost, the blessed power of Pentecost, to fill me to the uttermost.

I take. He undertakes for me. And the people of God said, Amen.

You may be seated. One second after midnight. And then, what then? There is something quite eerie about midnight.

At that time both hands point heavenward. It is a reminder of eternity that lies beyond this scene of time. You have to look higher than anywhere in the world for the real exposition of man's life beyond this scene of time.

This eeriness is best described in the Bible language of the book of Job, at the chapter thirty-four and the verse twenty. In a moment shall they die, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and pass away, and the mighty shall be taken away without hand. The song of Solomon speaks of fear in the night.

Midnight is a rubicon for the immortal soul. It is a vital passing from one scene of life's existence to the great scene of life's existence in the world beyond. How solemn the crossing of that line must be.

How final the crossing of that line must be. How dreadful the crossing of that line must be if the destiny beyond it has not been ascertained and assured. The Bible tells us of ten midnights.

Each one of them are worthy of our special study. And all of them prompt the question, one second after midnight, and then? What then? Let me take you down to the land of Egypt. The midnight of all midnights is about to occur in the kingdom of the night.

The whole kingdom is going to lose at one stroke all its heirs. The whole kingdom at one stroke is to be disinherited. Every heir is to die.

Every firstborn is to be slaughtered. After nine devastating plagues, the last crack of God's whip of punishment and justicement is about to fall. It is the final doom of Pharaoh and his people.

In Exodus chapter eleven, we read that Moses said, Thus saith the Lord, about midnight will I go out in the midst of Egypt, and all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die. The firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maid servant that is behind the mill, and all the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more.

But that's Luke, the midnight. What happens then? The Bible says that death comes first, but after death, the judgment. Midnight, quickly, solemnly, and in terror.

But then to the souls that were punished, eternity began. The heir to Egypt's throne was ushered into a black eternity. The heir of the meanest slave in the kingdom was caught up in the same final death of dark punishment.

For all lost souls, eternity is the same. The cry which started in Egypt at midnight is still re-echoing through the caverns of the damned today. It is a cry which never finishes.

In that place that our Lord Jesus Christ warned us of, for their worm doth not die, and their fire is not quenched. This is the first midnight mentioned in Holy Scripture. By the Scripture rule, the law of the first mention in Scripture points the way to its meaning throughout the whole Bible.

What is the second mention of midnight in the Scripture? Judges chapter 16 and verse 3. And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city of the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron. Samson, caught up in his own lust, is found in a brothel in Giza. The Philistines wait until the morning before they seek to seize that unwelcome visitor.

It seems as if Samson's career is going to end very speedily indeed. But at midnight, the mighty Samson outwitted all his enemies. And we have just read, oh, there is an escape from judgment one minute before midnight comes.

Samson is mentioned in the great list of the champions of the faith of the Hebrew people in the New Testament, in the book of Hebrews, at chapter 11. There is no need for you to perish in that midnight visitation of judgment. There is mercy even for the Samsons of this world.

Because the gospel of God's mercy is a gospel that speaks of the fact where sin abounded, grace did much more. You can escape the death that never dies. You can flee for refuge this very night and lay hold of eternal life in Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Escape the damnation of judgment one second before it will be too late. The gates to the city of sin and their side posts have been removed by the mighty Savior of men, the Lord Jesus Christ. He has carried them up to the hilltop of Calvary and broken their strength.

And there is a cry in this scripture to your soul, escape for thy life. Look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be.

That is further teaching on the further mention of midnight in the Holy Scripture. But when we turn over to the New Testament, we find that the first mention of midnight is found in Matthew chapter 25 and verse 6. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom, cometh, go ye out to meet him. It is the midnight cry of the return of Christ to this earth and that great prophetic happening, the married supper of the Lamb.

The message is the same as the Old Testament in its emphasis on the punishment of those who are unprepared. But there is a further emphasis underscored in the New Testament. The blessing of those who are prepared.

And further all is stumped with eternal finality. Verse 10, And the door was shut. And the door was shut.

The availability of oil for the five foolish virgins was just as ready and accessible as the oil to the wise virgins. The refusal of the foolish virgins to buy oil in preparation for a long night of waiting was tragic indeed. And then their effort to rob the wise virgins of their sustained light demonstrated the darkness and the deception and the folly of the lost souls.

They never acknowledged their own foolishness. They never acknowledged their own responsibility. When midnight came, the doom of the lost was eternally sealed.

Listen to these words of Christ. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh. Too late is the eternal punishment of their wicked sinning. In a further passage we read the argument of those rejecters of Christ.

Luke's Gospel, chapter 13, 25 to 28. And Christ said, When once the master of the house is risen up and is shut to the door, and you begin to stand without and to knock the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are.

Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not, whence ye are. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourself thrust out. That is the destiny deciding question that you've got to face tonight. The final mention of midnight in the New Testament is found in Acts 20, verse 7. And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight.

The late, very lengthy farewell address of St. Paul to the truest congregation led to a sleepy individual who fell asleep, and fell from the top of the house to the bottom of it, and was picked up as dead. But the apostle raised the young man to life again, and the sanctity of the seventh day, and its worship was vindicated. God overrules all things for the greater glory of His providence, and so encourages us to both expect great things from Him, and attempt great things for Him.

There is one final midnight I would like to refer to in closing this message tonight. Paul and Silas had one most severe and terrible day of persecution when they brought the gospel for the first time to Europe. Evangelizing in Philippi, the casting out of the devil from the young woman which started a storm of fierce, satanic opposition.

It ended with Paul and Silas imprisoned in the inner jailhouse of the city. But nothing daunted. Paul and Silas, faithful apostles of Jesus Christ, prayed and sang praises unto God at midnight, and the prisoners heard them.

And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm, we are all here.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them that same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized he in all his strength. And when he brought them into his house, he sat meekly before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

The first midnight in Exodus in the Bible is about household salvation. The Passover lamb for the house. Here in Philippi, the lamb is for the whole house.

And the whole house of the Philippian jailer were seen. Children of God, household salvation for your entire family is the promise of the book of God. Such was the result after the midnight in Philippi, and such can be your result.

One second after midnight, and then, what then? May it be eternal bliss, and not eternal punishment for your soul forever. Amen. Let's bow our heads in prayer.

O God our Father, we thank thee for the clarity and purity of thy word, and the simplicity of its seeming truth. We thank thee that Christianity is supernatural, and it works supernaturally in our heart, changing us from love of sin to love of Christ. Changing us from loving the falsity and wickedness of the broad road, and making us to love the purity and the holiness of the narrow path.

Take a dealing with all who have heard thy word this night, and great hope that no one will go on in the folly of heading to the midnight hour, unprepared and unready for the great eternity. But may they turn while the Spirit in mercy is pleading, and steer for the harbor bright. For how do they know that their soul may be drifting over the deadline? Turn souls to the cross, to the place of pardon and divine salvation, and bring them out of the terrible darkness of satanic deception, into the glorious light of God's everlasting salvation.

For Jesus Christ's great name's sake, and the people of God said, Amen.

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