

Scriptures and Doctrine :: It's midnight -- where are you?

It's midnight -- where are you? - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/21 15:39

I know this is a very long post, but please take the time to read through it.

Lately, I've been trying to find out more about the word "midnight" in the Bible. I want to share what I've found so far, and ask if anyone else has any more insight or knowledge behind the metaphoric meanings, applications, or any other references...whatever you can offer, because I'm strongly interested! I've already talked to Jason (Jason) and Greg (wrtbooks) about it. :-)

I want to first make it clear that my intention in posting this is not to teach, but to be taught. I am a girl, and it is not my place to teach. Please rebuke, correct, encourage, etc. me in this.

My attention was first piqued when my pastor mentioned Acts 16:25 in reference to what needs to take place for a revival to occur: sincere and heartfelt prayer and praise (praise being the acknowledgement of who God is). In this verse, the word for midnight is mesonuktion.

Other places in the Bible, it is a joining of mesos and nux. In Hebrew, it is a combination of chots' th, ch'ats@y, or t'vek...and layil, I'yl, or layl'ch.

Every time I see the word midnight, something important is happening. It's a turning point. I'm having a hard time expressing what I mean, so please bear with me here. :-P Let me just go with the verses.

I've found thirteen verses that have "midnight" in them, from Exodus to Acts. I'm going to list and quote them, and if you don't recognize them (many are recognizable), really go back and skim through that section where the verse is. I put asterisks next to the ones that really stood out to me - I hope you'll see what I see in the importance of the use of the word "midnight" here. These are all KJV.

*Exodus 11:4-5 - And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts.

*Exodus 12:29-30 - And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in 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 in the night, 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.

Judges 16:3 - And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and 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 an hill that is before Hebron.

*Ruth 3:8 - And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

1 Kings 3:20 - "And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom." (Speaking is one of the two harlots before King Solomon.)

*Job 34:20 - 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.

Psalms 119:62 - At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments.

*Matthew 25:6 - "And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." (The ten virgins with the lamps.)

*Mark 13:35-37 - "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, watch."

Luke 11:5-7 - And He said unto them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee."

*Acts 16:25-26 - And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: 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 every one's bands were loosed.

Acts 20:7 - And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto the m, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

Acts 27:27 - But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the ship men deemed that they drew near to some country; and sounded, and found it twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms.

Do you see what I see? IÂ'm not implying that Christ will return literally at midnight when He finally comes back for us, but is midnight not symbolic for the time when weÂ'll finally be taken? How will He find us? Where we be at the feet of the One we know who will care for us always, as Ruth was? Will we be found praying and singing praises, not for the prisoners or guard, but for Him alone, as Paul and Silas were? Will we be counted among the wise virgins, or the ones who were shut out? It is the time when the work is finished Â- how much will we have contributed?

Again, if youÂ've got any insight or comments or anything else to offer, IÂ'd be thrilled. (Well, IÂ'm already thrilled in being allowed to go deeper into GodÂ's Word, but you know what I mean. ;-))

Re: It's midnight -- where are you? - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/22 20:23

Any feedback at all? Anyone? :-)

Re: - posted by todd, on: 2003/9/22 21:40

Thank you for expounding that for us. I find it very interesting. I had never undergone a study of midnight before. Is that list of verses exhaustive of every instance of "midnight" in the Bible?

There's a book by Tozer called "True Revivals Are Born After Midnight: Spiritual Renewal Comes to Those Who Want it Badly Enough." I have only read a few chapters in it but here's a few things I underlined in chapter one:

"Yet there is considerable truth in the idea that revivals are born after midnight, for revival (or any other spiritual gifts and graces) come only to those who want them badly enough. It may be said without qualification that every man is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wants to be. He may not be as full as he wishes he were, but he is most certainly as full as he wants to be."

-pp. 7-8

"Not the hour of night but the state of his heart decides the time of his visitation ."

- pp. 9

"No, there is no merit in late hour prayers, but it requires a serious mind and a determined heart to pray past the ordinary into the unusual. Most Christians never do. And it is more than possible that the rare soul who presses on into the unusual experience reaches there after midnight."

- pp. 10

I have heard that angels and other things in the spiritual realm are most often seen in the late hours. I think the 3-5 a.m. shift is the most active. But I don't really know. Is "midnight" in the Bible is just referring to that late night/early morning time when most people are asleep?

Also, didn't Leonard Ravenhill get up at midnight to pray? I thought I heard that somewhere.

Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/23 2:42

I think the list of verses is exhaustive (thank God for the wonderful resource of e-Sword). My only "picking and choosing" of the verses was done through the use of astericks.

I've never even heard of that book by Tozer before, as much as I love him. (The disadvantages of being a Christian for a short time...go as far as God allows in your walk, but still missing out on knowing all about Christian history, outside resources and supplements, etc...)

I don't know much about angels. I've never really actually put much focus on them because God's always had something more important to teach me. Maybe someday.

As far as the significance of midnight, I drew mostly the symbolism of Christ's return from the use of the word "midnight". Yes, most people are asleep during this time, which only increases the symbolism of the word.

Re: It's midnight -- where are you? - posted by lwpray (), on: 2003/9/23 3:08

Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?
The watchman hath said, 'Come hath morning, and also night'.
Isa 21:11

A watchman, a Christian awakened to the times, to the state of this present hour, takes no pleasure in things belonging to the night; yet he allowed himself to become skilled in discernment and in the art of definitions.

A watchman, an intercessor, prepares himself and is waiting for the return of the Lord by perfect obedience under the lordship of the Holy Spirit unto a solid testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This attitude and stance is certainly born after midnight; that is in an effort as to moral and spiritual practice of godly disciplines which goes way beyond the common average. It will leave no room for follies of fantasy, hype, emotionalism or harsh legalism. The watchman is a sober intercessor as well as a thinking person.

Lars

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/9/23 10:05

Quote:

-----The list of verses is exhaustive (thank God for the wonderful resource of e-Sword)

Well, not exactly ;-)

I recently, through one of the Google ad's here received the E4 Groups Free BibleSoftware (You do pick up the shipping costs for the CD) Anyway, barely getting my feet wet with it, but it is very well laid out and has a huge topic search, besides all the free books (37 I believe) McCheyne's Sermons and letters alone is worth having it. Very impressed with it so far. www.FreeBibleSoftware.com

Here is a couple more from my search:

Judges 7:19

So Gideon, and the hundred men that were with him, came unto the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch: and they blew the trumpets, and brake in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands

American Standard Version (1901)

Job 10:22

The land dark as midnight, The land of the shadow of death, without any order, And where the light is as midnight.

American Standard Version (1901)

Luke 12:38

And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and find them so blessed are those servants.

American Standard Version (1901)

Watches

The periods into which the time between sunset and sunrise was divided. They are so called because watchmen relieved each other at each of these periods. There are frequent references in Scripture to the duties of watchmen who were appointed to give notice of the approach of an enemy (2 Sam. 18:24-27; 2 Ki. 9:17-20; Isa. 21:5-9). They were sometimes placed for this purpose on watch-towers (2 Ki. 17:9; 18:8). Ministers or teachers are also spoken of under this title (Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 33:2-9; Heb. 13:17).

The watches of the night were originally three in number,

1. "the beginning of the watches" (Lam. 2:19);
2. "the middle watch" (Judg. 7:19); and
3. "the morning watch" (Ex. 14:24; 1 Sam. 11:11), which extended from two o'clock to sunrise.

But in the New Testament we read of four watches, a division probably introduced by the Romans (Mt. 14:25; Mk. 6:48; Lk. 12:38).

Easton. Eastons Bible Dictionary

Quote:
-----I've never even heard of that book by Tozer before, as much as I love him. (The disadvantages of being a Christian for a short time. .go as far as God allows in your walk, but still missing out on knowing all about Christian history, outside resources and supplements, etc...)

On Tozer; Ditto!

On the 'disadvantages', I can relate somewhat, probably why I have become such a glutton for books and resources, etc . The difference being that you are still much younger than I and if the '70-80' year pattern holds, you will soon surpass me all in wisdom and knowledge :-D

Praise God for your hunger to know Him more!

Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/9/23 15:21

Mike, thank you so much for those additional verses, and for the freebiblesoftware.com resource. I don't know about "surpassing" y'all in knowledge though...I'll be content to just go as far as God lets me. :-)

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/9/23 19:40

Chosen7Stone said:

Quote:
-----Lately, I've been trying to find out more about the word "midnight" in the Bible. I want to share what I've found so far, and ask if anyone else has any more insight or knowledge behind the metaphoric meanings, applications, or any other references...whatever you can offer, because I'm strongly interested!

I think this is so awesome! I have never considered how the theme of midnight passes through all of scriptures. I have read through the entire post and have already been edified! :-D

Quote:
-----Do you see what I see? I'm not implying that Christ will return literally at midnight when He finally comes back for us, but is midnight not symbolic for the time when we'll finally be taken? How will He find us? **Where we be at the feet of the One we know who will care for us always, as Ruth was?** Will we be found praying and singing praises, not for the prisoners or guard, but for Him alone, as Paul and Silas were? Will we be counted among the wise virgins, or the ones who were shut out? It is the time when the work is finished -- how much will we have contributed?

That is beautiful and is worth drawing to peoples attention again. Its wonderful to be at the masters feet in prayer, let Him find us there seeking his face in the time when He returns.

Notes on Matthew 25:6

At midnight - Later than was the usual custom, and hence, they had fallen asleep
from Barnes

At midnight there was a cry - The Jewish weddings were generally celebrated in the night; yet they usually began at the rising of the evening star; but in this case there was a more than ordinary delay.
from Clarks

At midnight - In an hour quite unthought of.
from Wesley's

And at midnight--that is, the time when the Bridegroom will be least expected; for "the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night" (1Th_5:2).
from JFB

It is interesting to glean from these commentaries that the time referenced to as 'midnight' in the gospel parable seems to be a peculiar time. It's a delay something that is not expected because it is past due. It reminds me of the *first* coming of Christ, there was a 400 approx. year of prophetic silence before His coming. Everyone in some ways considered the time for a messiah past due. In the same way the *second* coming of Christ is being thought of in these ways also. Its been 2000 years and the world is going on in the same ways, we can draw one sobering thought from all of this: "Be patient, the n, brothers until the Lord's coming.... because the Lord's coming is near." - James 5:7-8

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/9/24 18:43

here is some extra info about the words: **mid-night** and **night**.

G3571

νύξ

nux

Thayer Definition:

- 1) night
- 2) metaphorically the time when work ceases
- 2a) the time of death
- 2b) the time for deeds of sin and shame
- 2c) the time of moral stupidity and darkness
- 2d) the time when the weary and also the drunken give themselves up to slumber

Part of Speech: *noun feminine*

Also I noticed that the this greek word *nux* appears in revelation 8 times:

(Revelation 4:8 ASV) and the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest *day and night*, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.

(Revelation 7:15 ASV) Therefore are they before the throne of God; and they serve him *day and night* in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall spread his tabernacle over them.

(Revelation 8:12 ASV) And the fourth angel sounded, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; that the third part of them should be darkened, and the day should not shine for the third part of it, and the **night** in like manner.

(Revelation 12:10 ASV) And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God *day and night*.

(Revelation 14:11 ASV) and the smoke of their torment goeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest *day and night*, they that worship the beast and his image, and whoso receiveth the mark of his name.

(Revelation 20:10 ASV) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they shall be tormented *day and night* for ever and ever.

(Revelation 21:25 ASV) And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut *by day* (for there shall be no **night** there):

(Revelation 22:5 ASV) And there shall be **night** no more; and they need no light of lamp, neither light of sun; for the Lord God shall give them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

Its awesome to note that in Revelation chapter 22 there is no more night and day because God is the light forever and e

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ver! But until that time night signifies 'the time for deeds of sin and shame' and 'the time of moral stupidity and darkness'.

Quote:

------(Ephesians 5:8) "For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light"

In this life we are living in darkness and Jesus is coming at the darkest point.. when evil and immorality reigns God will come for His purified bright Bride! The closer we get to the end the more contrast between light and darkness there will be, until at the worst point when it seems like the Church has lost its way in the dark the Bridegroom will come! The time of midnight is not a glorious time in itself, but because its the time when Christ comes back it is a day to anticipate and expect amidst the circumstances.

Re: It's midnight -- where are you? - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2003/9/24 19:49

Quote:

----- ...but is midnight not symbolic for the time when we'll finally be taken? How will He find us?

Great Study C7S!

I just have one note; the idea that we should always be on our "watch" applies not only to Christ's return but to death also. We don't know during which watch in our lives (young, middle-age, old-age) our Lord will take us.

In Christ,

Ron

Re: commentary helps - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/9/24 21:33

Quote:

-----**Psa 119:62** -

At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee - In the usual times of repose; when men are commonly lying in unconscious slumber. My heart is so interested in thy law - my soul is so full - that I am kept wakeful by meditating upon it, and I arise from my bed and offer thee praise. The Hebrew here means, literally, "the half," or "halving of the night," the night considered as divided into two equal portions. The idea is, that his mind was so full of the subject that he would take this unusual time to give vent to his feelings. The mind may be so full of love to the law - the word - of God, that nothing will satisfy it but such unusual acts of devotion. The Saviour rose up a great while before day, and went out into a solitary place and there prayed Mark_1:35; and on one occasion at least he continued all night in prayer to God Luk_6:12.
taken from barnes commentary

Will we be found slumbering at midnight or will be found 'that I am kept wakeful' by a supreme overflowing devotion and interest in the things of God. Is God the first and last things you think about? And as Tozer said what first comes to your mind when you think of God? Hopefully we have an awful vision of His Holiness and Divine rule over our life and this world. I fear that many first think of God as something to protect them or get them by in life.

Quote:

-----**Psa_119:62**

"At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments." He was not afraid of the robbers; he rose, not to watch his house, but to praise his God. Midnight is the hour for burglars, and there were bands of them around David, but they did not occupy his thoughts; these were all up and away with the Lord his God. He thought not of thieves, but of thanks; not of what they would steal, but of what he would give to his God. A thankful heart is such a blessing that it drives out fear and makes room for praise. Thanksgiving turns night into day, and consecrates all hours to the worship of God. Every hour is canonical to a saint.
treasury of david - Spurgeon

'Every hour is canonical to a saint' WOW what a statement. I have been felt led of God to wake at 3 or 4 am and read the bible and pray. Allow God to have complete rule over your time and life. Leonard Ravenhill said this one thing: 'I know that in my life I have given God time, much of it'.

Re: - posted by swsojourner (), on: 2003/10/17 1:43

Quote:

wrtbooks wrote:

Quote:

-----**Psa 119:62** -
*At **midnight** I will rise to give thanks unto thee* - Spurgeon

'Every hour is canonical to a saint'

Tremendous, "every hour is canonical to a saint"

Only one life, will soon be past