

AT MIDNIGHT

A TERMINAL HOUR, JUDGMENT, A NEW BEGINNING

By Arlen L. Chirwood

“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...

And it came to pass, that at *midnight* the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt...” (Ex. 11:4, 5a; 12:29a).

“Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor [the threshing floor]...

And she went down unto the floor...

And it came to pass at *midnight*...” (Ruth 3:3a, 6a, 8a).

“And at *midnight* there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him” (Matt. 25:6).

The first reference to “midnight” in Scripture is in Ex. 11:4, and it is associated with *God’s judgment occurring at a terminal time, with a new beginning in view* (the death of the firstborn, followed by the Exodus). And the use of “midnight” after this fashion, at this point in Scripture, establishes a *first-mention principle which never changes throughout Scripture*.

That is, as established at this point in Scripture, anytime the word “midnight” is subsequently used throughout Scripture — as in Ruth 3:8 or Matt. 25:6 — there is a direct allusion to *God’s judgment occurring at a terminal time, with a new beginning in view*.

The original, basic framework for the whole of the matter is seen in the opening thirty-four verses of Scripture (Gen. 1:1-2:3) — having to do with God’s restoration of a ruined creation over six days time, followed by a seventh day rest — seen within a septenary structure of Scripture at the very beginning.

(Refer to the first three chapters in the author’s book, *THE STUDY OF SCRIPTURE*, for information on different facets of the preceding.)

Attention is called to this opening framework and structure of Scripture because of the references used at the beginning of this pamphlet to three different places where the word “midnight” appears in Scripture (Ex. 11:4; 12:29; Ruth 3:8; Matt. 25:6).

The first appearance, in Exodus, relates to that foreshadowed by God’s restorative work on day one (Gen. 1:2b-5). And the appearances in Ruth and Matthew relate to that foreshadowed by God’s restorative work on days two through six (Gen. 1:6-31). Then, that foreshadowed by God’s restorative work throughout all six days is with a view to that foreshadowed by the seventh day of rest (Gen. 2:1-3).

That being introduced at the beginning of Scripture and dealt with in the preceding manner has to do with *salvation past, present, and future*.

The past aspect of salvation (salvation by grace, having to do with the spirit) is foreshadowed by God’s restorative work on day one and is seen typified by the events in Exodus chapters eleven and twelve.

The present aspect of salvation (the saving of the soul, the life) is foreshadowed by God’s restorative activity on days two through six and is seen in typical form in Ruth chapter three and in parabolic form in Matthew chapter twenty-five.

And, again, the whole of the matter is with a view to *the future, deliverance (salvation) in the seventh day*.

Thus, the thought of “midnight,” seen in all three portions of Scripture referenced, has to do with a *terminal time at the end of that foreshadowed by the six days (6,000 years, Man’s Day); and this is with a view to a new beginning, foreshadowed by the seventh day (1,000 years, the Lord’s Day)*.

(Thoughts on basics from the preceding will show what is wrong with much of the one-sided teaching pertaining to the complete panorama of salvation as seen in Christendom today [*God’s work restoring ruined man — past and present works, with a view to the future*]. Man, invariably, begins at the wrong place. Man, invariably, begins somewhere in the N.T., not where God began, *in the opening verses of Genesis*.)

And the correct beginning point — *Genesis* — would be true for studying any Biblical doctrine, which is the main reason why things, from a doctrinal standpoint, are so fouled up in Christendom today.

If man wants to get it right, he must begin where God began and stay with the way God has stated matters.)

God’s Past and Future Judgments

“Midnight” in relation to that seen in Exodus chapters eleven and twelve, originally dealt with through God’s work on day one in Genesis chapter one — *the Spirit of God moved, God spake, and light came into existence* — as will be shown, has to do with a *past judgment, followed by a new beginning*. And everything is performed through a Divine work, completely apart from man’s actions.

(Ruined man (dead in trespasses and sins) is no more in a position to bring himself out of his ruined state than the earth on day one in the first chapter of Genesis was in a position to bring itself out of its ruined state.)

As well, there is no such thing as a future judgment of man in relation to that part of God’s restorative work originally foreshadowed in Gen. 1:2b-5. There is a present work, performed by the Spirit breathing life into the one having no life, based on a past Divine work (God, in the person of His Son, paying the price which He required at Calvary). But all judgment connected with this initial part of God’s restorative work is *past*.

God has already judged sin in the person of His Son. And this would relate to those whom the Spirit has presently breathed life into and those whom He has not breathed life into. There is no difference in this respect, for, as previously stated, all judgment pertaining to the matter is *past*.

Note how John 3:18 reads in this respect:

“He that believeth on him is not condemned [‘judged’]: but he that believeth not is condemned [‘judged’] already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

There is simply no such thing as any man, whether saved or unsaved, appearing at a future judgment where his eternal salvation will be an issue. That would be impossible, for *God has already judged the whole of mankind, both the saved and the unsaved, pertaining to the matter.*

Future judgments of both saved and unsaved man will result in God carrying out that already determined in His past judgment on sin. But, again, man simply cannot be brought into judgment at some future time pertaining to that for which he has already been judged.

Note how this is seen in the type in Exodus chapter twelve. Exactly as at Calvary, almost fifteen centuries later, God judged sin through the death and shed blood of the paschal lambs. The Lord passing through the land of Egypt at midnight had to do with judgment in another respect entirely. It had to do with a carrying out of the decree pertaining to a past judgment, based on the death and proper application of the blood of the paschal lambs.

For the one who had followed the Lord’s instructions (the blood of a dead lamb had been applied to the door posts and lintel, showing that the firstborn in the family had died in a substitute), the Lord passed over that house. All judgment was past, and no present execution of judgment remained. The firstborn had already died.

But for the one who had not followed the Lord’s instructions (the blood of a dead lamb had not been applied to the door posts and lintel, showing that the firstborn in the family had not died in a substitute), the Lord executed the past judgment upon the firstborn in a personal manner. The firstborn had not yet died; consequently, he paid the penalty himself, apart from a substitute.

Thus, the first mention of “midnight” in Scripture

is connected with judgment, though dealt with concerning the execution of previous judgment. And, following this thought throughout Scripture, the same basic thing is seen relative to Christians in the type in Ruth chapter three and the parable in Matthew twenty-five.

Judgment and the execution of that judgment are so inseparably related though that the word for “judgment” (Gk., *krisis*) is used throughout. Thus, drawing a fine line through the use or non-use of the word “judgment” really can’t be done, for, again, this word is used throughout. And the context would have to be the determining factor as to how the word is being used.

God’s Present and Future Judgments

There is a present judgment for sin, inseparably connected with a future judgment. And, as seen in the previous section, dealing with past and future judgments for sin, the matter is the same. The former (past and present judgments) is just that — *judgment in both instances*. But the latter (future judgments) is *an execution or reckoning of that already judged*, though still seen and referred to as “judgment” throughout Scripture.

At that future time, all sin, in actuality, will have been judged in the past. And that judged in the past cannot somehow be re-judged in the future.

That already judged in the previous section had to do with Christ’s finished work at Calvary. Both the saved and the unsaved, believers and non-believers, have already been judged relative to this finished work.

And exactly the same thing can be seen relative to Christ’s present ministry in the heavenly sanctuary on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat — a ministry solely for Christians.

In Gen. 1:2b-5, when the Spirit of God moved, God spoke, and light came into existence, the light didn’t replace or do away with the darkness. Rather, God placed the light alongside the darkness, leaving the darkness entirely alone.

In the words of John 1:5 and II Cor. 4:6, *the light shined out of the darkness, with the darkness having no comprehension or understanding of the light*. The two are completely incompatible.

Both saved and unsaved man have that foreshadowed by darkness (the old sin nature), but only saved man has that foreshadowed by light (a new, God-imparted nature). And, because the darkness, the old nature, remains with saved man, he can easily be led into following this nature if he takes his eyes off that associated with the new nature.

And Christ is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, providing a present cleansing for Christians because of this very problem. This is what is seen in John chapter thirteen when Christ girded Himself, took a basin of water and began to wash the disciples’ feet. Or this is what is seen throughout John’s first epistle.

There is a present judgment for sin in the preceding respect. And if a Christian judges himself during the present time (I Cor. 11:31), he will not be judged yet future (Rom. 8:1).

In that future day when Christians appear before the judgment seat of Christ, judgment, in one respect, will all be past — whether judgment which occurred at Calvary, or judgment which occurred in the heavenly sanctuary, at the mercy seat. In this respect, the judgment seat of Christ will be an execution or reckoning of that already judged, though referred to in a judgmental respect as well.

And when will this occur?

Ruth appeared on Boaz’s threshing floor at *midnight*, but in a cleansed manner (Ruth 3:3, 6, 8). Thus, no judgment awaited her, only a carrying out of particular matters (redemption of the inheritance, and marriage).

In the parable of the ten virgins, the Bridegroom came at *midnight*. Five, as Ruth, were prepared for the things which were to occur (the marriage festivities); the other five though were not prepared.

And all were dealt with accordingly.

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 25:13).

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