

A Year of Midnight Miracles

January 1, 2012

As I was looking at 2012, I was surprised at the number of times the #12 is used in the Scriptures. In the Bible, the #12 is used 189 times. To some scholars, 12 refers to the number of the church, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. We know that 6 is the number of man, 7 is the number of God, and 12 relates to the Old Testament church and the New Testament church. This is why.

In the Old Testament, there were 12 patriarchs. They were the 12 sons of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Also, throughout the Old Testament, there were 12 tribes of Israel. When the children of Israel crossed over the Jordan River, Joshua made sure that 12 stones were taken and placed in the Jordan River.

In the tabernacle, in the very place God ordained (inside the holy place), there was a table of shewbread, and 12 loaves were on that table. On the breastplate of the garment the high priests wore were 12 stones that represented the 12 tribes of Israel, and each tribe's name was engraved on those 12 stones. So in the Old Testament, the #12 represented God's people.

In the New Testament, there were the 12 Apostles, who were the foundation of the church; and Jesus Christ Himself is the Chief Cornerstone.

There are 12 months in every year, and every day is broken up into two 12-hour periods. Twelve noon is the beginning of one 12-hour period, and 12 noon is the beginning of the descent of the sun. That means the day is ending. Twelve midnight is when the sun begins to ascend. That means 12 midnight is the beginning of a new day.

In the Bible, midnight is a turning point, a shift. Sometimes at midnight we are going through some things. We call it the "midnight hour." The Bible talks about the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ at the midnight hour. **Matthew 25:6** says, "At *midnight*, behold, the bridegroom is coming!"

There are 12 references in the Scriptures to the word "midnight," and God divided those 12 references so that there are 6 found in the Old Testament and 6 found in the New Testament. I'm going to draw one reference about midnight from the Old Testament and one reference about midnight from the New Testament.

Do you know that our God never stops working? Even at midnight, our God is still at work. He is always on the job. **Psalms 121:3** says, "He who keeps you will not slumber." **Verse 4:** "Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

Look at **Exodus 12:29**. "And it came to pass at *midnight* that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt." In **Verse 13**, as God was moving at the midnight hour and the death angel was passing over Egypt, He said, "When I see the blood, I will pass over." He passed over every house where He saw the blood of the Lamb on the door post.

That meant when God passed over at the midnight hour, everyone that was covered by the blood in that house was spared and saved. That sounds to me like God's salvation plan is a family plan! It was a **midnight miracle!**

Acts 16 in the New Testament tells us of another **midnight miracle**. Remember these words. ***"In 2012, you have to be where God wants you to be!"*** Don't let anybody or anything keep you from being where God wants you to be.

In **Verse 6**, Paul and Silas were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia; but just because they had a desire to preach the word in Asia did not mean that was where God wanted them to be. So, the Holy Spirit forbid them to go to Asia.

There is a place where God wants you to be. It is a divine place. It is the place where God will use you. It is the place where God will speak TO you and THROUGH you.

In **Verses 7-8**, Paul and Silas wanted to go into two other cities, but God forbid them to go. Don't go where God doesn't want you to go! ***"In 2012, you have to be where God wants you to be!"***

Paul and Silas were a team; yet, the Holy Spirit only revealed God's will to Paul. In **Verse 9**, in a vision, God revealed to Paul the place he and Silas were to go, and it was Macedonia. "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" **Verse 10** says they immediately obeyed and departed.

The longer you hesitate, the longer you debate, the more likely it is that you will not obey God. It is the same thing with salvation. When the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and drawing you, you must respond quickly. The more times you say no to God, the harder your heart becomes.

Paul and Silas immediately obeyed God. They got on a boat headed toward Macedonia, and they arrived in Philippi, which was an important area of Macedonia (**Verse 12**). They are now where God wanted them to be; and when they arrived there, they went right to work.

Verse 13 says they went on the Sabbath day to the riverside to pray. I think it was probably like a river bank where people went to wash their clothes. They went down where there was a gathering of people and encountered a woman named Lydia. She was a businesswoman. Even 2000 years ago, women were in business.

Lydia was a seller of purple. **Verse 14** says that "God opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul," and she received the words the Apostle Paul was sharing. Not only did Lydia give her heart to Jesus, but so did her entire household. They all got saved and were baptized. Does anybody want to see their entire family saved?

Paul and Silas continue going down to the river bank for prayer meetings, and they see a young lady there who was demon-possessed (**Verse 16**). She was a fortune-teller, and she was owned by men who

made money off her. Today they are called pimps. They controlled her, and she must have been profitable, because these men did not want to give her up.

She followed Paul and Silas around and cried out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God." She knew who they were. That means the demons inside her knew who these preachers were!

In **Verse 18**, it says that this spirit irritated Paul. In the Gospels, we find this very same scenario where demons spoke through human lips and declared that Jesus was the Son of God. So, even demons knew who Jesus was, and they also knew who Paul and Silas were.

After days and days of listening to this, Paul becomes "greatly annoyed." Finally, Paul said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her, and he came out that very hour." This young woman was no longer controlled by demons, and her owners (her pimps) got mad, because they now have lost their source of income.

The moment she is delivered, **Verse 19** says these men have Paul and Silas arrested. They are being persecuted for doing the work of the gospel. **2 Timothy 3:12** says, "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

I believe persecution is going to intensify in 2012. I know you don't want to hear that, but persecution of Christians IS intensifying. I have loved football all my life, and I have never seen the persecution that is being thrown at Tim Tebow. All he is doing is kneeling in prayer.

Muslims in London blocked an entire city block kneeling down toward Mecca, and the police did nothing about it. Some of you have no idea what is going on in the world around you. In Dearborn, Michigan, some Christians were witnessing. They were not disturbing anyone. If you don't know, the city of Dearborn is almost entirely Islamic.

The police arrested these Christians, because they said they were intimidating the Islamic people. All they were doing was exercising their freedom of speech, but right now it is being taken away from Christians. I am here to tell you that the Bible tells us that all who desire to live godly will suffer persecution.

There are brothers and sisters in this world right now who are behind iron bars because they love Jesus. Thank God we live in America. Thank God we live in a free country, but there is an all-out effort being made right now to silence the saints of God!

In **Verse 22**, Paul and Silas were dragged into the marketplace, their clothes were torn off their bodies, and they were beaten with rods. Then they were thrown into prison. In the Greek, the word "thrown" means, "to throw something without regard to where or how it lands."

They were thrown into a dungeon, the darkest and innermost area of the prison. They have been beaten, they are bleeding, they are in pain, their hands are cuffed, and their feet are shackled (**Verse 24**).

Write this down. ***“The level of your character and the level of your commitment to Christ will always be measured by what it takes to cause you to quit.”***

Even though I have seen it happen many, many times, I am always surprised at what it takes to make people quit. We are all going to be tested. The devil knows our weaknesses, and he will battle us in the areas where we are weak.

Don't become offended when God starts dealing with you in the areas where you need to improve. God wants us to be strong in every area of our lives, so when the tests come, we are able to overcome every obstacle; but, if there is any quit in you, the devil will find it! ***“Your character and your commitment to Christ will always be measured by what it takes to cause you to quit.”***

Paul and Silas are in the darkest part of the prison, their backs are bleeding, their hands are cuffed, and their feet are shackled, but something triggers a **midnight miracle**. In 2012, we are going to need some **midnight miracles**, and something will trigger a **midnight miracle**.

Here are a couple things you need to get hold of. (1) Maintain a faith-filled attitude while under pressure. That is tough! When we are under pressure, it seems like our instant response is to complain and murmur. When the pressure is applied, if we are not careful, we will murmur and complain; but maintain a faith-filled attitude while you are under pressure.

(2) Keep a tight grip on what you know to be true. Their backs are bleeding, their hands are cuffed, their feet are shackled, and it is all Paul's fault! Paul had the vision. Silas didn't have the vision. He just followed Paul, and now look at where he is!

We all have options. We can complain, grumble, and gripe. It's amazing that two people can see the same thing but have two different perceptions of what they saw! God sent 12 men into the promised land to spy out the land, and all 12 of them observed the same thing.

They all saw the grapes, and they all saw the giants; but 10 of the 12 returned and said they could not achieve what God said they could achieve. Only 2 came back believing they could take the land, but all 12 of these men saw the same thing.

Paul and Silas are now together, but when Paul received the vision, Silas did not have to receive the same vision. He trusted Paul! Silas went on Paul's leading, without any doubting or reservation, and they both got on a ship the very next day and headed toward Macedonia.

Now, when Silas had the opportunity to blame Paul for him being beaten and thrown into prison, he didn't. He started praying and praising God with Paul (**Verse 25**)! Now we separate the men from the boys. They aren't preaching. They are praising, and every prisoner heard them; BUT, they are in pain, their backs are bleeding, their hands are cuffed, and their feet are shackled!

I don't think Paul and Silas prayed to get out of there, because we will see something happen in just a little while. They didn't feel like praising God, but they praised Him anyhow. I think the greatest praise is the sacrifice of praise. Praise Him when you don't feel like it, because He is the Lamb of God, and He is worthy of your praise!

Psalm 119:62 says, "At *midnight* I will rise to give thanks to you." At midnight, in the midst of your pain, you can grumble and complain, or you can praise God. It's a choice. Paul and Silas made a choice to praise God.

Psalm 22:3 says that God dwells (enthrones Himself) in the midst of His peoples' praise. He doesn't need drums or guitars. He just needs your voice! He needs to hear the praises of His people; and when we begin to praise Him with a pure heart, He comes down and enthrones Himself in the midst of those praises. When that happens, God releases His power and begins to shake things up.

In **Verse 26**, when God showed up, He shook the place up! It seems like, just when everything is going great, God changes our plans. I guess He has the freedom to do that, because He is the boss; but, without fail, when God begins to move in a different way, it shakes people up.

A great man of God told me one time that, in the Kingdom of God, you will find God doing something in the church. He will build it up, and then He will sift it. He does that because, if the church doesn't have a strong foundation, it will collapse. He will build the church up, and then He will sift it down.

In the last days, the Bible says that there will be a great falling away. In the last days, the Bible says the hearts of many will grow cold. How can you stay hot? Keep praying and keep your praise on; and it's not the *volume* of your praise that matters. It's the *effect* of your praise!

When an earthquake occurs, roofs of buildings collapse and walls cave in; but with this earthquake, no roofs collapsed or walls caved in. What happened during this earthquake (this move of God, this shaking of God) was that every cell door was opened and everyone's chains fell off!

That tells me, when God shows up and begins to shake things, the only things He will shake are those things man has put on you! Everything man has done to try to pull you down and hold you down, when God shows up, He will shake off!

When those cell doors opened up, that meant *new opportunities*. I declare unto you that in 2012, you are going to have some *new opportunities*. Also, when their chains were loosed, they all were *set free*. I declare unto you that in 2012, God is going to *set you free* from some stuff.

All of a sudden, in the midst of this shaking, the jailer woke up and was going to take his own life (**Verse 27**), because his perception was that everyone had escaped. Then Paul shouts out in **Verse 28**, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

The jailer gets a light, runs in to Paul and Silas' cell, falls to his knees and says, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The promise of salvation is given to him in **Verse 31**. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and

you will be saved; you and your household.” There is salvation in His name, deliverance in His name, healing in His name!

Do you remember when God moved over Egypt at the midnight hour, and every household that had the blood applied to the door post was spared and saved? We now see another **midnight miracle**. Not only was there the promise of salvation for the jailer, but there was also the promise of salvation for his entire household.

Then Paul and Silas preached to this jailer’s entire family. They were all baptized that very night, because Paul and Silas stayed where God put them! I believe that if you are going to move into the arena God wants you to in 2012, you need to **go exactly where God wants you to go, and when you get there, STAY PUT!**

Most people would have bolted when the place was shaken, but Paul and Silas stayed put. Were they crazy? No! God didn’t tell them to leave! Don’t let anybody cause you to leave God’s will. Stay where God has placed you! People will try and talk you into leaving, but in 2012 **go where God tells you to go and stay there!**

Paul and Silas didn’t run when the shaking started; and because they stayed put, this jailer and his entire family were saved. If they had run, there would have been no one to have brought the plan of salvation to them. If you will check, in Philippians, that book is written to a church that was birthed (that sprung) from Paul and Silas staying put. Don’t run when things start shaking!

In 2012, I believe if we keep praying, obeying, and praising, we are going to see God’s power *shake our families*. I believe God is going to *shake our finances*. Tithing works, because this world is not our source. Jesus Christ is our source! I believe God is going to shake our *finances*, our *circumstances*, our *families*, and our *situations*; but we have to keep praying, obeying, and praising. 2012 is going to be an interesting time.

In **1 Kings 17**, there was a famine in the land of Israel, and God used ravens to feed Elijah. Then God used Elijah to feed a widow and her entire family. Some of you wonder where the miracles of the Bible are. Miracles are always birthed out of storms.

Every once in a while it rains. Every once in a while it gets dark. Every once in a while you can’t feel God. Every once in a while you have to hold on by faith that God hasn’t left you nor forsaken you. I believe if we will keep praying, obeying, and praising, in 2012 God is going to shake some things up!

One thing you have to remember is that the Kingdom of God is unshakeable. This world may shake, but the Kingdom of my God is unshakeable. Whatever falls off of us is just stuff this world has tried to put on us, but **midnight miracles are coming! Midnight miracles are coming!**