“Outer darkness” is simply one realm immediately outside of another realm,  
called “outer darkness” by way of contrast to the “inner light.”  
Those cast out are removed from a sphere associated with light  
and placed outside in a sphere associated with darkness.

Following events of the judgment seat of Christ,  
servants having been shown faithful and servants having been show unfaithful  
will find themselves in two entirely different realms.

**The one in whom the Spirit has breathed life possesses a life that can never be taken from him.**

**Cast Outside into Outer Darkness**  
**By Arlen Chitwood of** [Lamp Broadcast](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

*And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* ([Matthew 25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV))

**Contents:**

[Cast Outside](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Cast%20Outside)

[A Darkness on the Outside](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#A%20Darkness%20on%20the%20Outside)

[Contextual Considerations](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Contextual%20Considerations)

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**Cast Outside**

The nature of the treatment awaiting the *unfaithful* servant at the hands of his Lord in the parable of the talents has been completely *misunderstood* by numerous *Christians*, leading them to conclude that the Lord was dealing with an *unsaved* person at this point in the parable.

*The Lord sharply rebuked the unfaithful servant, commanded that the talent be removed from his possession, and then commanded that he be cast into the darkness outside.*

The main problem that most Christians have with the latter part of this parable is the ultimate outcome of the Lord’s dealings with His unfaithful servant — the fact that he was cast *into outer darkness*. “Outer darkness,” within their way of thinking, is to be equated with *Hell* (the final abode of the unsaved in *the lake of fire*). And knowing that a Christian can never be cast into Hell — for the one in whom the Spirit has breathed life possesses a life that can never be taken from him — those equating “*outer darkness*” with *Hell* are left with no recourse other than to look upon the Lord’s dealings with the unfaithful servant and the Lord’s dealings with the unsaved as synonymous.

It probably goes without saying that had the Lord treated the unfaithful servant in a somewhat less severe fashion, very few Christians reading this account would ever think about questioning the individual’s salvation, for the response of the unfaithful servant would be perfectly in line with verses such as [1 Corinthians 3:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.13&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+3.15&t=NKJV) and would have presented no indication, in their way of viewing matters, of the status of his salvation. But the Lord’s sharp rebuke, the removal of the talent from his possession, and his being cast into outer darkness constitute what many view as a *sequence of events that could not possibly befall a Christian*.

Such an outlook on this passage though is completely contrary to any biblical teaching on salvation by grace through faith (seeing the possession or non-possession of this salvation through man’s works, actions). Or, such an outlook on the passage, as well, ignores both the text and the context, resulting in an interpretation that, contextually, is completely contrary to that which is seen in this passage or in any other similar passage in Scripture.

And by forcing erroneous interpretations of the preceding nature on this passage, the door will have been opened for all types of erroneous interpretations in related passages of Scripture.

Just to name a few, the door will have been opened for the introduction of:

1) Erroneous views pertaining to salvation by grace through faith.

2) Erroneous views of the purpose for the present dispensation.

3) Erroneous views of the coming judgment of Christians.

4) Erroneous views of the perfect justice and righteousness of God.

Then, if introducing erroneous views of the preceding nature in different realms of biblical doctrine by and through a forced, non-contextual interpretation is not enough in and of itself, something else should be noted. Such an outlook on the parable of the talents in [Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV) will, as well, close the door to the correct interpretation of this complete, overall passage, the one which the Lord had in mind when He related this parable in the presence of His disciples.

Error will have fostered error and closed doors, leaving the student of Scripture adhering to erroneous systems of thought and in a position where he cannot possibly understand aright the Lord’s present and future dealings with His household servants.

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**A Darkness on the Outside**

The expression “*outer darkness*” only appears three times in Scripture, and all three are found in the gospel of Matthew ([Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV)). Luke, in his gospel, alludes to outer darkness in a parallel reference to [Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV) ([Luke 13:28-29 ASV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+13.28-29&t=ASV)) but does not use the words. He simply reduces the expression to “*without*” (ASV).

In the Greek text, both Matthew and Luke use the compound word *ekballo*, which means to “cast out” (*ek*, “out”; *ballo*, “to cast”). Following the use of this word, the place into which individuals in these passages are cast is given in both gospels.

In the gospel of Matthew, the place where individuals are cast is described as “*into outer darkness* [*lit.*, from the Greek text, ‘into the darkness, the outer,’ or as we would normally say in an English translation, ‘*into the outer darkness*’].”

(In the Greek text there are definite articles before both the noun and adjective, with the adjective following the noun — “the darkness, the outer.” In a construction of this nature, by a repetition of the article, there is an emphasis placed on the adjective, “outer.” It is not just any darkness, but a particular darkness. It is a particular place of darkness outside and contiguous to a particular place of light.)

Then, in the gospel of Luke, the place where individuals are cast is described as “without,” or “on the outside.” That is, by comparing Matthew’s account, they are cast “without,” or “on the outside” of a place of light; and this place, in the gospel of Matthew, is described as a place of darkness.

Accordingly, many Christians in that day will find themselves in the darkness outside the lighted banqueting hall ([Matthew 22:9-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.9-13&t=NKJV)); and these same Christians will, as well, subsequently find themselves outside the scope of the rule and reign of the One who said, “*I am the light of the world*” ([Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV); [25:19-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.19-30&t=NKJV); [John 9:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+9.5&t=NKJV)). And the expressed thoughts by both Matthew and Luke locate this place immediately outside and contiguous to the region from which those in view are cast. Both passages refer to the same place — *a particular region of darkness outside a particular region of light*.

The place *from* which these individuals are cast is one of light. This is possibly illustrated best in Matthew chapter twenty-two ([Matthew 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22&t=NKJV)). In this chapter, “*outer darkness*” is used to describe conditions in an area immediately outside the festivities attendant a royal wedding. Such festivities in the East would normally be held at night, inside a lighted banqueting hall. On the outside there would be a darkened courtyard; and the proximity of this darkened courtyard to the lighted banqueting hall would correspond perfectly to the expression, “the outer darkness,” or “the darkness on the outside.”

A person in the banqueting hall, cast into the courtyard, would be cast out of the light into the darkness. This is the picture, and this is exactly what will occur in relation to that which is being dealt with in [Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV); [22:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-14&t=NKJV); [25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV) — *i.e.*, cast out of the marriage festivities and out of the kingdom which follows.

“Outer darkness” is simply one realm immediately outside of another realm, called “outer darkness” by way of contrast to the “inner light.” Those cast out are removed from a sphere associated with *light* and placed outside in a sphere associated with *darkness*.

Following events of the judgment seat of Christ, servants having been shown *faithful* and servants having been show *unfaithful* will find themselves in two entirely different realms.

Servants having been shown *faithful* will find themselves among those forming the bride of Christ and in a position to attend the marriage festivities. And these individuals will subsequently be positioned on the throne as co-heirs with Christ, forming the consort queen who will reign with the “*King of kings, and Lord of lords*.”

Servants having been shown *unfaithful* though will not form part of the bride; nor will they be allowed to attend the marriage festivities; nor will they be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ. Rather, they will find themselves in a place outside the realm where these activities occur.

They will *be removed from the inner light* (be removed from a place associated with events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ that follows) and be *cast into the darkness outside* (be cast into a place separated from events surrounding the marriage supper of the Lamb and the reign of Christ which follows).

This is *the way* “outer darkness” is used in Scripture; and this is *the only way* the expression is used. Any teaching concerning “outer darkness,” remaining true to the text, must approach the subject *only from a textual and contextual fashion of this nature*, recognizing the subject matter at hand.

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**Contextual Considerations**

The gospel of Matthew outlines a sequence of events pertaining to Israel and the kingdom, which anticipate the existence of the Church, after a manner not seen in the other three gospels. The central message in the gospel of Matthew, leading up to the events surrounding Calvary, pertains to:

*The offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel.*

*The rejection of the kingdom by Israel.*

*The removal of the kingdom from Israel.*

These things, in turn, anticipate the Church subsequently being called into existence to be *the recipient of that which Israel rejected*.

Matthew presents God dealings with *the house of Israel* in relation to the kingdom of the heavens, with *the house* ultimately being left “*desolate*” because of the nation’s rejection ([Matthew 23:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.2&t=NKJV), [13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.13&t=NKJV), [38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.38&t=NKJV)); and Matthew also anticipates God dealings with *a house* separate and distinct from Israel in relation to the kingdom of the heavens ([Matthew 16:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.18-19&t=NKJV); [21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); [24:40-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-25.30&t=NKJV)). It is within this framework, along with individual contextual settings, that Christ’s three references to “*outer darkness*” are to be understood in the gospel of Matthew.

1) [Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV)

The first appearance of “*outer darkness*” in Matthew’s gospel is in [Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV), and the text and context both have to do with *the message of the kingdom*. Jesus had just finished a lengthy discourse to His disciples, commonly called “The Sermon on the Mount” ([Matthew 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5&t=NKJV); [6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6&t=NKJV); [7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7&t=NKJV)), which is a connected discourse dealing with *entrance into or exclusion from the kingdom of the heavens* (*cf.* [Matthew 5:1-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+5.1-12&t=NKJV); [6:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+6.33&t=NKJV); [7:13-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+7.13-27&t=NKJV)).

Preceding the Sermon on the Mount, the subject matter concludes in chapter four ([Matthew 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4&t=NKJV)) with the message concerning the kingdom. Then, the subject matter continues in chapter eight ([Matthew 8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8&t=NKJV)), following the Sermon on the Mount, with this same message concerning the kingdom.

The message at this point actually picks up where chapter four ([Matthew 4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4&t=NKJV)) left off — with supernatural, physical healings, and later with supernatural provision. These supernatural, physical healings appear before, in conjunction with, and after the text concerning the kingdom of the heavens and outer darkness in chapter eight ([Matthew 8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8&t=NKJV)). Then accounts of supernatural material provisions for the people follow (*e.g.,* [Mark 6:32-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+6.32-44&t=NKJV); [John 2:1-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+2.1-11&t=NKJV)).

These miraculous works of Christ among the Jewish people were *signs* having to do with “*the kingdom*” (*cf.* [Isaiah 35:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+35.1ff&t=NKJV); [Matthew 4:23-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+4.23-25&t=NKJV); [25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25&t=NKJV); [10:5-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.5-8&t=NKJV); [11:2-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+11.2-5&t=NKJV)). They constituted the credentials of the messengers of the gospel of the kingdom and pointed to that which Israel could have — *supernatural healing* (for both the people and the land [*cf.* [2 Chronicles 7:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Chronicles+7.14&t=NKJV); [Isaiah 1:4-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+1.4-9&t=NKJV)]), *supernatural provision*, and the *restoration of the theocracy* — *if the nation would repent*. It is within a contextual setting such as this that “*outer darkness*” first appears in the gospel of Matthew.

Actually, the subject arose after a Roman centurion expressed faith that Christ could heal his servant (who was sick at home) by just speaking the word. Christ used the faith exhibited by this Gentile to illustrate a contrasting lack of faith exhibited by those in Israel. Christ said that He had “*not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*” ([Matthew 8:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.10&t=NKJV)). He then spoke of a day when *many* would come “*from east and west*” and “*sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens*.”

That is, a separate and distinct group of individuals, taken mainly from the Gentiles, would exhibit faith on the same order as this centurion and enter into the heavenly sphere of the kingdom. But those to whom this heavenly sphere of the kingdom naturally belonged, because of their lack of faith, would be excluded. The “*sons of the kingdom* [those forming the nation of Israel]” would be “*cast out*” ([Matthew 8:11-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11-12&t=NKJV)).

The entire scene anticipated [Matthew 21:43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.43&t=NKJV) where the heavenly portion of the kingdom was taken from Israel in view of a separate and distinct group ultimately occupying that which did not naturally belong to them.

This group would be comprised of those who, at that time, were *aliens*, *without hope*, and *without God* (*i.e.*, Gentiles). But “*in Christ Jesus*” these conditions would change. They would be “*brought near by the blood of Christ*.” And, by and through the immersion in the Spirit, those having been “*brought near by the blood of Christ*” would become *new creations* “*in Christ*,” part of the *one new man*, who is “*neither Jew nor Greek* [‘Gentile’].” Then, by being “*in Christ*” (who is Abraham’s Seed), they, by and through this positional standing, would become “*Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise* [the heavenly portion of the promise given to Abraham and his progeny, which was taken from Israel]” ([2 Corinthians 5:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.17&t=NKJV); [Galatians 3:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.17-18&t=NKJV), [26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+3.26-29&t=NKJV); [Ephesians 2:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12-15&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Genesis 22:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Genesis+22.17-18&t=NKJV)).

2) [Matthew 22:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-14&t=NKJV)

The second appearance of “*outer darkness*” in the gospel of Matthew is in the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two ([Matthew 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22&t=NKJV)). The contextual usage in this passage is in association with *the kingdom of the heavens and the activities attendant a royal wedding*.

Contextually, the “*king*” and His “*son*” ([Matthew 22:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.2&t=NKJV)) can only be identified as *God the Father* and *God the Son*. The “*servants*” and “*other servants*” ([Matthew 22:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.3-4&t=NKJV)) sent “*to call those who were invited* [Israel]” would refer to the ministries of *the prophets*.

This offer, however, was spurned, and the messengers were ill-treated. Then, last of all, God sent His Son — with John as His forerunner — saying, “*They will respect* [KJV: ‘reverence’] *my son*” (*ref.* previous parable [[Matthew 21:33-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-39&t=NKJV)]). But, although God had stated that they would respect His Son, all things that the Jewish people would do were known to Him from the beginning; and this, as foretold, was not to happen.

Jesus, near the conclusion of His earthly ministry, rode into Jerusalem astride an ass, presenting Himself as Israel’s King in fulfillment of the prophecy in [Zechariah 9:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Zechariah+9.9&t=NKJV) ([Matthew 21:1-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.1-11&t=NKJV)). And He, too, was rejected, culminating in His crucifixion and death (*cf.* [Matthew 21:37-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.37-39&t=NKJV); [22:1-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-6&t=NKJV); [23:1-36](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+23.1-36&t=NKJV)).

The rejection and impending crucifixion of God’s Son was the final blow. The kingdom was then taken from Israel and extended to a separate and distinct nation (*cf.* [Matthew 21:40-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.40-46&t=NKJV); [22:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.8-10&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 2:9-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-10&t=NKJV)). And, though God used this new nation — *the one new man “in Christ”* — to re-offer the kingdom to Israel (seen in the book of Acts), rejection on Israel’s part continued (with the re-offer of the kingdom being withdrawn about 62 A.D., at the time of Paul’s announcement in [Acts 28:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+28.28&t=NKJV)).

Individuals comprising this new nation are synonymous with those from the “*east and west*” in [Matthew 8:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11&t=NKJV) and those out in “*the highways*” in [Matthew 22:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.10&t=NKJV). And *unbelief on Israel’s part*, followed by *others being brought in to be the recipients of that which naturally belonged to Israel*, leads up to the mention of “*outer darkness*” in both passages.

At this point though there is a difference in the two passages. Outer darkness in [Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV) is reserved for “*the sons of the kingdom* [a reference to Israel in this text],” but outer darkness in [Matthew 22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV) is reserved for an individual appearing at the marriage festivities attendant the wedding of God’s Son. He appeared without the proper attire required for entrance into these festivities. He appeared without a wedding garment (*ref*. [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Prophecy on Mount Olivet, Ch. 13](http://bibleone.net/POMO_13.htm)).

Israel had previously been mentioned in verses three through seven ([Matthew 22:3-7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.3-7&t=NKJV)), with the man appearing without a wedding garment being identified with those called *after* the kingdom had been taken from Israel (*cf.* [Matthew 22:8-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.8-10&t=NKJV), [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.14&t=NKJV)). This man would, thus, be among those from the “*east and west*” in [Matthew 8:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.11&t=NKJV) or those found in “*the highways*” in [Matthew 8:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.10&t=NKJV).

To reconcile that which is taught in these two passages, bear in mind that at the time of [Mat. 8:11-1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mat.+8.11-1&t=NKJV)2 the kingdom of the heavens had not yet been taken from Israel; but [Matthew 22:1-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.1-14&t=NKJV) was given at a time *following* the announcement concerning the removal of the heavenly portion of the kingdom from Israel, with the anticipated offer of the kingdom being extended to another group ([Matthew 21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV)).

In both passages it is *the recipients of the offer* of the kingdom of the heavens who find themselves associated with the place called “*outer darkness*.” In Matthew chapter eight ([Matthew 8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8&t=NKJV)), the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was open to Israel alone, even though the allusion was made to others being brought into this kingdom. But at the time of the events in Matthew chapter twenty-two ([Matthew 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22&t=NKJV)), the announcement had previously been made concerning this part of the kingdom being taken from Israel; and now the new recipient of the proffered kingdom was in view (though this new recipient — *the one new man “in Christ”* [[1 Peter 2:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.9-11&t=NKJV)] — was yet to be brought into existence [[Matthew 16:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.18&t=NKJV)]).

Thus, “*outer darkness*” is used the same way in both passages. It is used in association with those to whom the offer of the kingdom of the heavens was *then* being extended.

3) [Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)

The third appearance of “*outer darkness*” in Matthew’s gospel is in a tripartite connected discourse that deals with *the Jews*, *the Christians*, and *the Gentiles* — the Olivet Discourse. The inception of Christianity *awaited a future date* at this time; but the discourse, given following Christ’s statement that He would build His Church and following the removal of the kingdom of the heavens from Israel, anticipated *the one new man* “*in Christ*” being brought into existence ([Matthew 16:18-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.18-19&t=NKJV); [21:33-43](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.33-43&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Ephesians 2:12-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Ephesians+2.12-15&t=NKJV)).

To place the third appearance of outer darkness in Matthew’s gospel in its proper perspective, note a succinct review of the Olivet Discourse over the next several pages, with a particular emphasis on the Christian section of the discourse:

*The first part of the discourse* ([Matthew 24:4-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-39&t=NKJV)) deals exclusively with events pertaining to Israel during the coming Tribulation and with the return of the nation’s Messiah at the conclusion of the Tribulation. Israel had rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, and now the nation must pass through the Tribulation and await her Messiah “*in the way of Your judgments*” ([Isaiah 26:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Isaiah+26.8&t=NKJV)).

*The second part of the discourse* ([Matthew 24:40-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-25.30&t=NKJV)) deals with the new recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens. The emphasis throughout this section is upon present faithfulness in view of a future time of reckoning, anticipating the kingdom.

*The third part of the discourse* ([Matthew 25:31-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-46&t=NKJV)) deals with judgment upon living, saved Gentiles following Christ’s return at the conclusion of the Tribulation. These would be Gentiles saved mainly under the ministry of the 144,000 of [Revelation 7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+7&t=NKJV); [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+14&t=NKJV) (*cf.* [Matthew 25:31-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-46&t=NKJV); [Revelation 6:9-11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+6.9-11&t=NKJV); [7:9-17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+7.9-17&t=NKJV); [20:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+20.4-6&t=NKJV)), who proclaim the “*gospel of the kingdom*” to the ends of the earth during the last half of the Tribulation (*cf.* [Matthew 24:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.13-14&t=NKJV); [Revelation 12:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.5&t=NKJV), [17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+12.17&t=NKJV)).

In this fashion, the three sections of the Olivet Discourse reveal God’s dealings with the three segments of mankind — *Jew, Christian,* and *Gentile* — either during and/or at the conclusion of the present dispensation.

*In the Jewish section of this discourse* ([Matthew 24:4-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.4-39&t=NKJV)), God’s dealings with Israel are restricted to the time during and immediately following the coming Tribulation. The reason for this is very simple: Israel has been set aside during the present time while God removes from the Gentiles “*a people for His name*” ([Acts 15:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+15.14&t=NKJV)). The time when God will deal with Israel once again awaits the completion of His purpose for the present dispensation. This is the reason why the Jewish section of the Olivet Discourse begins with Israel in the Tribulation. This section begins at the point where God resumes His dealings with Israel once again.

*In the Christian section of this discourse* ([Matthew 24:40-25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-25.30&t=NKJV)), unlike the Jewish section, God does deal with a people during the present time — a time preceding the Tribulation. And those with whom God is presently dealing are the recipients of the offer of the kingdom of the heavens *following* Israel’s rejection of this offer, which is exactly what is in view in this section of the Olivet Discourse.

*In the Gentile section of this discourse* ([Matthew 25:31-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.31-46&t=NKJV)), only the Gentiles are in view. God, at that time in the future when these events occur, will have completed His dealings with Israel and the Church.

God will complete His dispensational dealings with Christians first (which includes judgment); and this will be followed by God completing His dispensational dealings with Israel (which includes judgment). *Then*, God will deal with saved Gentiles coming out of the Tribulation in judgment, immediately prior to His 1,000-year reign over the earth (which will be 1,000 years of judging — ruling the nations with “*a rod of iron*”).

With the whole of the Olivet Discourse succinctly summarized in the preceding manner, note where the third and last mention of outer darkness in the gospel of Matthew is seen. This third and last mention of “*outer darkness*” lies at the end of the parable of the talents, which concludes the Christian section of the Olivet Discourse. However, “*outer darkness*” is not restricted to the parable of the talents in this section. The parables of *one taken, another left* ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)), *the Householder and His servant* ([Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV)), *the ten virgins* ([Matthew 25:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.1-13&t=NKJV)), and *the talents* ([Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)) are interrelated after such a fashion that the expression “*outer darkness*” must be looked upon as applicable in parallel passages in all four.

Four parables follow the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the “*days of Noah*” (the parable of the fig tree [[Matthew 21:19-21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+21.19-21&t=NKJV); [24:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.32&t=NKJV)] and the days of Noah [[Matthew 24:37-38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.37-38&t=NKJV)] have to do with *Israel and the nations during the Tribulation*, not today). And the main thought throughout this entire section of Scripture (the parable of the fig tree, the days of Noah, and the four subsequent parables) centers on the *due season*, *watchfulness*, and *readiness* for the Lord’s return, introduced in the parable of the fig tree and comments concerning the days of Noah (the two passages that set the tone for the four parables that follow (*one taken, another left* [[Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)], *the Householder and His servant* [[Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV)], *the ten virgins* [[Matthew 25:1-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.1-13&t=NKJV)], and *the talents* [[Matthew 25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV)]).

In the parable about one taken, another left ([Matthew 24:40-44](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.40-44&t=NKJV)), *watchfulness*, having to do with *faithfulness*, resulted in *the person being ready for the Lord’s return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding positive action by the Lord when He did return*. But *un-watchfulness*, having to do with *unfaithfulness*, resulted in the person *not being ready for the Lord’s return*; and this, in turn, resulted in *corresponding negative action by the Lord when He did return*.

And though Christians will not see the days referred to by the parable of the fig tree and the days of Noah, they can see signs on every hand, having to do with both, that the world is rapidly approaching that time referred to by the prophets and these verses in Matthew’s gospel. A remnant of Jews is back in the land (resulting from a Zionistic movement), existing as a recognized nation among nations; and sexual promiscuity, as portended by Noah’s day, has become rampant in our day (though not an open participation of angels in the matter; such awaits the days of the coming Tribulation [both heterosexual and homosexual, for that which occurred during the days of Lot are to mark this time as well]).

Then in the parable of *the Householder and His servant*, the thought drawn from that which has preceded centers on *faithfulness* in dispensing “*food* [KJV: ‘*meat’*] *in due season*.” If the servant *remains faithful*, he will be made ruler over all the Lord’s goods; but if the servant *becomes unfaithful*, he will be “*cut . . . in two*” and be appointed “*his portion with the hypocrites*.”

(Note that by comparing [Matthew 24:45-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.45-51&t=NKJV) with the parallel section in [Luke 12:42-46](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+12.42-46&t=NKJV), it is clear that only one servant is in view throughout. *The servant either remains faithful or he becomes unfaithful*.)

*The parable of the ten virgins* immediately following begins with the word “*Then*,” pointing back to the parable of the Householder and His servant. The parable of the ten virgins covers the same subject matter, providing additional information from a different perspective; and this parable concludes in a similar fashion by showing that which awaits both those who are ready and those who are not ready at the time of the Lord’s return.

*The parable of the talents*, immediately following the parable of the ten virgins, is introduced in the Greek text by the words *Hosper gar* (“*For just as*”); and these two introductory words tell the reader that the parable about to follow is just like the parable that has preceded it. In a respect, these two words tell the reader that an explanatory parable for the parable of the ten virgins (and the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins as well) is about to be given.

Verse fourteen ([Matthew 25:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14&t=NKJV)), introducing the parable of the talents, should literally read,

*For it* [referring back to the parable of the *ten virgins*, and, consequently, the parables of the *Householder and His servant* and *one taken, another left*] *is just as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.*

The parables, “one taken, another left,” “the Householder and His servant,” “the ten virgins,” and “the talents” *ALL center on the same basic issue. ALL present different facets of exactly the same thing.*

(Note that “a parable,” by its own definition — from the meaning of the word itself [from the compound Greek word *parabole* (*para*, “alongside”; *bole*, “to cast”)] — is simply one truth placed alongside of a previous truth to help explain the previous truth [*i.e.*, a truth cast alongside (which would necessitate a previous truth)].

In the parable of the talents, a truth is placed alongside of a previous truth [in this case, the parable of the ten virgins, along with the two parables preceding the parable of the ten virgins (since all deal with the same basic issue)]. And the truth being placed alongside [the parable of the talents] is being given to help explain [provide additional light for] that which Christ had previously stated in the preceding three parables.)

In the parable about *one taken, another left*, the thought from the Greek text regarding the English translation, “*one will be taken and the other left*” (Matthew 24:40-41) should be understood in the sense of “one shall be received alongside [alongside the Lord], and the other turned away [turned away from the Lord].” The two verbs used in the Greek text are: *paralambano* and *aphiemi*.

*Paralambano* is a compound word, meaning “to take alongside, “to receive alongside” (*para*, “alongside”; *lambano*, “to take,” “to receive”); and *aphiemi* means “to send away,” “to turn away.”

The entire scene is judgmental, as evident from the succeeding three parables — all dealing with different facets of the same thing. In the parable, comparing it with the other parables, faithfulness resulted in a position alongside the Lord, but unfaithfulness resulted in the forfeiture of this position.

(The rapture is seen only indirectly in this parable or in any one of the three succeeding parables. Thoughts in these parables have to do with events preceding the rapture and events following the rapture, not with the rapture itself *per se*.)

In the parable of the Householder and His servant, *faithfulness* would result in the servant being positioned as ruler over all the Lord’s goods, but *unfaithfulness* would result in the servant (the same servant) being assigned a place with the hypocrites.

In the parable of the ten virgins, *the faithful servants* (wise virgins) were allowed to enter into the marriage festivities, but *the unfaithful servants* (foolish virgins) were excluded from these festivities.

And in the parable of the talents, *the faithful servants* were allowed to enter into “*the joy*” of their Lord, but the *unfaithful servant* was cast into the darkness outside (*i.e.*, cast into a place of darkness outside Christ’s “joy,” having to do with the things surrounding His reign over the earth, which would include the preceding marriage festivities [*cf.* [Luke 19:16-19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.16-19&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV)]).

Understanding the interrelationship between these parables and comparing them with the parable of the marriage festival in chapter twenty-two ([Matthew 22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22&t=NKJV)), it becomes clear that “*outer darkness*” is associated with all four. This is the place where the unfaithful servants found themselves in all of the parables, even though the expression is used only in the parable of the talents. One parable describes the place, and all four describe *conditions* in this place — whether in a place outside the marriage festivities or outside Christ’s subsequent reign.

Comparing the parable of the Householder and His servant with the parable of the talents, note that positions of rulership are in view in both parables. Only the faithful will be apportioned these positions. The unfaithful will not only be denied positions in the kingdom but they will be apportioned their place “*with the hypocrites*,” where there will be “*weeping and gnashing of teeth* [an Eastern expression signifying deep grief]” ([Matthew 24:51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.51&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV) ASV); and this place is referred to as “*the outer darkness*” (ASV) in the latter parable.

(Note the same expression in [Matthew 22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV) in connection with “*the outer darkness*” [*cf.* also [Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV)]. Also note that the unfaithful among the ten virgins were excluded from the marriage festivities [[Matthew 25:10-12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.10-12&t=NKJV)], as was the man without a wedding garment [who was bound and cast into “*the outer darkness*”] in [Matthew 22:11-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.11-13&t=NKJV).)

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HE WENT OUT …

*But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard . . .*

*Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, “You also were with Jesus of Galilee.”*

*But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you are saying.”. . .*

*But again he denied with an oath, “I do not know the Man!”. . .*

*Then he began to curse and swear, saying, “I do not know the Man!” Immediately a rooster crowed.*

*And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, “Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” So he went out and wept bitterly.* ([Matthew 26:58](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.58&t=NKJV), [69-70](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.69-70&t=NKJV), [72](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.72&t=NKJV), [74-75](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.74-75&t=NKJV))

*And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. . . .*

*If we endure* [‘patiently endure’], *we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.* ([2 Timothy 2:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.5&t=NKJV), [12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV))

Possibly the best illustration given in Scripture showing the downward path that is possible for a Christian to take, ultimately leading into the place of darkness outside the light, is the recorded actions of the apostle Peter immediately preceding Christ’s crucifixion.

Christ had informed His disciples that all of them would “*made to stumble* [KJV: ‘*be offended’*]” during the next few hours because of Him; and from that time until the time Peter is seen weeping bitterly because of his offense, there are *seven steps* recorded in Scripture showing how Peter was brought into the condition in which he found himself at this time ([Matthew 26:31-75](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.31-75&t=NKJV)).

(The words “*made to stumble/offended* [Greek: *skandalizo*]” in [Matthew 26:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.31&t=NKJV) has to do with *something causing opposition, which can result in a fall*. This is the same word used in [Matthew 13:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+13.21&t=NKJV), which, according to [Luke 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.13&t=NKJV), can result in a *falling away, apostasy*. The words “*fall away*” in [Luke 8:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+8.13&t=NKJV) are the translation of *aphistemi* in the Greek text. This is the verb form of the noun *apostasia*, from which we derive our English word “apostasy.”

*Apostasia*, a compound word, simply means, “to stand away from.” The word *stasis* means “to stand”; and the preposition *apo*, prefixed to the word, means, “from.” Thus, *apostasia* has to do with standing away from something else [*e.g.*, standing away from a previously held position, belief, etc.].

The disciples — and particularly Peter — in this respect, because of opposition, *apostatized*. That is, they stood away from the position that they had previously held with Christ, which is exactly what Christ alluded to in [Matthew 26:31ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.31ff&t=NKJV).)

*Step One:* Peter would not accept Christ’s statement concerning that which the disciples were about to do, as he, on a previous occasion, had not accepted Christ’s statement and had to be rebuked by the Lord ([Matthew 16:21-23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.21-23&t=NKJV)). Peter then made his boast that he would never allow opposition to bring about a falling away (*cf.* [James 4:13-15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+4.13-15&t=NKJV)); and in response to Christ’s subsequent statement that he would deny Him three times that very night, Peter responded, “*Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You*”; and the other disciples responded likewise. But during the next few hours, not only would Peter *deny Christ* “*three times*,” but “*all the disciples*” would *forsake Him and flee* ([Matthew 26:33-35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.33-35&t=NKJV), [56](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.56&t=NKJV)).

*Step Two:* In this boast by Peter and the disciples, a double negative is used in the Greek text, both in verse thirty-three ([Matthew 26:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.33&t=NKJV)) relative to not allowing opposition to bring about a falling away and in verse thirty-five ([Matthew 26:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.35&t=NKJV)) relative to denying Christ. The use of a double negative in the Greek text (quite common in the Greek New Testament) is for emphasis, making the thought of “never” or “not” very emphatic. An English translation should be worded after a fashion to show this.

For example:

*Peter answered and said to Him, “Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.” . . .*

*Peter said to Him, “Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You.” And so said all the disciples.* ([Matthew 26:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.33&t=NKJV), [35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.35&t=NKJV))

Christ then took Peter, James, and John, separate from the other disciples, into a particular place in the Garden of Gethsemane. Once in this place, He told them, “*My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me*.” However, when Jesus went aside to pray, rather than watching, the disciples fell asleep. The Lord then had to rebuke them *for not watching and praying* that they not “*enter into temptation*” ([Matthew 26:36-41](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.36-41&t=NKJV)).

*Step Three:* Judas had betrayed Christ to the religious leaders of Israel; and he then led “*a band of men and officers*,” dispatched by the religious leaders, into the garden to take Christ. Seeing them, Peter drew his sword and resorted to the arm of flesh, to human means, to accomplish his previous boast.

Any battle in which the disciples found themselves engaged was to be *spiritual*, and it is exactly the same for disciples today. But Peter sought to force his will on others *through physical means* (the day when Christ will take the scepter and “*strike through kings*” was future at that time, and it remains future today [[Psalm 110:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1ff&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Psalm 2:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.1ff&t=NKJV)]. In this respect, Peter’s actions were completely out of place, as similar actions by Christians would be today).

(Christians can exert far more power through prayer than through any fleshly means possible. In fact, the chasm separating the two is as far as the East is from the West. One has to do with accessing divine, infinite power; the other has to do with accessing humanistic, finite power.)

Peter, in his vain, fleshly effort, cut off an ear of one of the high priest’s servants; but Jesus, completely rejecting his actions, told him to put up the sword, and He then healed the servant, restoring his ear ([John 18:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+18.10&t=NKJV); [Matthew 26:47-55](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.47-55&t=NKJV); [Luke 22:50-51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.50-51&t=NKJV)).

*Step Four:* Then the actions of Peter and the other disciples continued accordingly. The man of flesh had gained the ascendancy, and the disciples were now doing exactly what they had previously stated would not occur. Though having previously boasted of that which they would do, the disciples were found sleeping when they should have been watching and praying; and Peter had resorted to the arm of flesh, as he sought to carry out his previous boast. And this was followed by all the disciples doing exactly what they had previously stated would not occur:

*Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled.* ([Matthew 26:56b](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.56b&t=NKJV); *cf.* [Matthew 26:35](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.35&t=NKJV))

*Step Five:* Peter then began to follow Christ “*at a distance* [KJV: *‘afar off’* ].” He had taken the sword, and it was about to result in his ruin. He had resorted to the arm of flesh and was in the process of reaping that which he had sown (*cf.* [Matthew 26:52](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.52&t=NKJV); [Galatians 6:7-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Galatians+6.7-8&t=NKJV)). Because of his previous actions, the closeness that had been his in Christ’s inner circle, along with James and John, was now gone (*cf.* [Matthew 17:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+17.1&t=NKJV); [26:37](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.37&t=NKJV), [58](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.58&t=NKJV)).

*Step Six:* When Jesus was taken into the high priest’s palace for questioning by the religious leaders, Peter, following Him “*at a distance*,” remained outside in the courtyard. Rather than identifying himself with Christ on the inside, he sat down with the enemy on the outside ([Matthew 26:69](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.69&t=NKJV); [Luke 22:54-55](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.54-55&t=NKJV)).

*Step Seven:* Peter’s past actions had now led him to the final point in his fall. When accused of being one of Christ’s disciples, Peter denied his Lord on three separate occasions, followed by the cock crowing a second time just as Christ had foretold. And the Lord, being led at that moment past Peter to “*the Praetorium* [KJV: ‘*the hall of judgment’* ]” ([John 18:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+18.28&t=NKJV)), turned and *looked* upon Peter, awakening him to the stark reality of that which he had done ([Matthew 26:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.34&t=NKJV), [69-74](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+26.69-74&t=NKJV); [Mark 14:72](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Mark+14.72&t=NKJV); [Luke 22:61](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.61&t=NKJV)).

The Lord’s look in this passage was far more than a brief glance. The word used in the Greek text (*emblepo*) points to Christ fixing His eyes upon Peter in an intently searching manner. Peter came under *the Lord’s scrutiny* for his actions, causing him to remember that which had previously occurred. Peter then “*went out and wept bitterly*” ([Luke 22:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+22.62&t=NKJV)).

(The scene can only be *judgmental* in nature, portraying that future day when Christ, with “*eyes as a flame of fire*,” will judge those who are His, as they stand in His presence [*cf.* [Revelation 1:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.14&t=NKJV)].)

Peter, because of his past actions, following Christ’s intently searching look, found himself *outside, weeping bitterly*. And the whole of the matter surrounding Peter presents the whole of the matter surrounding unfaithful Christians and outer darkness.

Peter, because of his actions, following Christ’s intently searching look, found himself in a place comparable to the place that Scripture describes as “*the outer darkness*,” where there is “*weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (*cf.* [Matthew 8:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+8.12&t=NKJV); [22:13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+22.13&t=NKJV); [24:51](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+24.51&t=NKJV); [25:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.30&t=NKJV) ASV)

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[Prophecy on Mount Olivet by Arlen Chitwood](http://lampbroadcast.org/Books/POMO.pdf), Ch. 21