**“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.**

**A Darkness on the Outside  
By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

***A particular place of darkness outside, but contiguous to, a particular place of light.***

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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(Excerpted from [Cast Outside into Outer Darkness](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#Cast%20Outside%20into%20Outer%20Darkness) in this site.)