

UNDERSTANDING THE 'OUTER DARKNESS' PASSAGES IN MATTHEW (Should Christians Fear Outer Darkness with Weeping & Gnashing of Teeth?)

A. UNDERSTANDING the ISSUE and QUESTION.

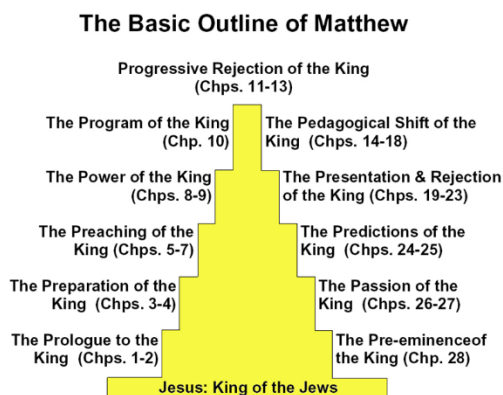
1. This question regards....

- a. _____, not unbelievers or simply believers in other ages.
- b. _____ actually, or figuratively into _____.
- c. experiencing _____ due to _____ at the Bema Seat.

2. The various views:

- a. There is the _____ view that applies to _____, which may even involve being cast into _____ during the Millennium. Who espouses this view?
- b. There is the _____ view that applies to _____ that includes being cast into a _____ of outer darkness that is within the Kingdom or in close proximity to it during the Millennium. Who espouses this view?
- c. There is the _____ view that applies to _____ which involves receiving _____ at the Bema and _____ outer darkness during the Millennial Kingdom. Who espouses this view?
- d. There is the _____ view that states these realities only apply to _____, and that there are no _____ associated with the Judgment Seat of Christ. Who espouses this view?

B. OBSERVING the Book of Matthew CONTEXTUALLY.



C. OBSERVING the 'OUTER DARKNESS' Passages EXEGETICALLY.

Matthew 8:10-13 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11 "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

- What event is this passage describing?
- Who are the "sons of the kingdom" in this passage?
- What is "outer darkness"?
- What is "weeping and gnashing of teeth"?
- Is outer darkness for believers or unbelievers?

Matthew 13:36-43 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 "The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 "The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 "Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 "The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 "and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

- Who are the "sons of the kingdom" vs. the "sons of the wicked one"?
- When does this event take place?
- What is the "furnace of fire" and "wailing and gnashing of teeth"?
- Who are these people contrasted with? Are these believers or unbelievers?

Matthew 13:47-50 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, 48 "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

- When does this event take place?
- Who will the angels separate?
- What again is the furnace of fire, and wailing & gnashing of teeth?
- Are those believers or unbelievers who experience wailing and gnashing of teeth?

Matthew 22:1-14 And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 "and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 "Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.'" 5 "But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 "And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. 7 "But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 "Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. 9 'Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10 "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. 11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 "So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. 13 "Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 14 "For many are called, but few are chosen."

- Who are the “them” in vs.1? Are these believers or unbelievers?
- What event is again being addressed?
- What does “worthy” mean in vs.8?
- What is helpful to understand about the wedding garment? (vs.12)
- Does the word “friend” indicate that this was a believer? (vs.12)
- Instead of entering the wedding feast that inaugurates the Kingdom, what happens to this individual without the wedding garment? (vs.13)
- Does this judgment refer to an unfaithful Christian or an unbeliever?

Matthew 24:36-51 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. 37 "But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38 "For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 "and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40 "Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 "Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42 "Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. 43 "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 45 "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? 46 "Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 "Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 "But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' 49 "and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 "the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 "and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- What event is being highlighted throughout this passage and who personally is Jesus Christ contrasting throughout this passage?
- Who experiences being “cut ... in two” with “weeping and gnashing of teeth”?

Matthew 25:1-30 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 "Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 "Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 "but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 "But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 6 "And at midnight a cry was heard: `Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 "Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. 8 "And the foolish said to the wise, `Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 "But the wise answered, saying, `No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' 10 "And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, `Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 "But he answered and said, `Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 13 "Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.

- Do the virgins represent the nation of Israel or the Church?
- Were the unprepared virgins without oil referring to unfaithful church-age believers or unbelievers?

14 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 "And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 "Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 "And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. 18 "But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 "After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, `Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 "His lord said to him, `Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 22 "He also who had received two talents came and said, `Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 "His lord said to him, `Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, `Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 `And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 26 "But his lord answered and said to him, `You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 `So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 `Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 `For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 `And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

- Who is the “servant” in reference to here?
- Who is being contrasted in this parable?
- Who is cast into the outer darkness with wailing and gnashing of teeth?
- Why is it called “outer darkness”?
- What does “weeping and gnashing of teeth” mean?
- What then follows in the remainder of the Olivet Discourse to reinforce this interpretation?

Luke 13:22-30 And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. 23 Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there few who are saved?" And He said to them, 24 "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. 25 "When once the Master of the house has risen up and shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, 'I do not know you, where you are from,' 26 "then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' 27 "But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' 28 "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. 29 "They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the kingdom of God. 30 "And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

- What issue is being addressed by our Lord in His ministry?
- What again is the response of the Lord to the person outside the door?
- Where was a similar response found in Matthew?
- Who again are contrasted and who experiences the weeping and gnashing of teeth?

D. HIGHLIGHTING the SERIOUS PROBLEMS of the 'PUNITIVE DAMAGES FOR BELIEVERS AT THE BEMA' View.

1. It insults the scriptural doctrine of the _____ of Jesus Christ. [Rom.3:23-25; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:9-10]
2. It assaults the scriptural doctrine of the _____ as it relates to all 3 tenses of salvation [Tit. 2:11-13; Rom.6:1-14] and the believer's total _____. [Eph.1:6-7; 2:4-10]
3. It twists the scriptural teaching that while God does _____ believers in time out of _____ for their spiritual _____, God never _____ His born again children out of _____ like He does the unsaved. [Hebrews 12:1-11; 1 Cor.11:30-32]
4. It confuses the real issues at the Judgment Seat of Christ which are not a matter directly of the believer's _____ but of their _____, _____, _____, and _____. [1 Cor.4:1-5; 2 Cor.5:9-10]
5. It misunderstands the outcome of the Bema for the believer in Christ which is either being _____ by Christ or _____, never _____; thus, a believer's possible _____ is inconsistent with a proper understanding of God's _____, not something that is healthy and should be expected. [1 Cor.3:11-15; 1 John 2:28; 4:17-18; Jn. 14:1-3]
6. It disregards the reality that the passages being used to teach these aberrant views are _____ passages taken out of _____ from the _____, not _____ truth taken from the _____.