

The Outer Darkness: Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth – Part III

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Introduction

The Gospel of Matthew presents us with a most interesting dilemma. Matthew's beginning and ending primarily tell us the value of serving the King of kings and, through His parables, show us the consequences of not doing so. Matthew gives us the kingship of the second Adam with emphasis on the *called, chosen, and faithful* descendants of Adam. This remains God's plan.

Genesis 1:26 (HCSB) ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. *They will rule* the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth."
Emphasis mine

Genesis 1:28 (HCSB) ²⁸ God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and *subdue it. Rule* the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth."

Matthew's synopsis begins with ruling not with the first Adam, but the second Adam, Jesus of Nazareth, the Emmanuel or God with us.

Matthew 1:1-2 (NKJV) ¹ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham: ² Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers.

The book, the historical record of the *generation (those after His kind)*, Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" – Matthew begins with Jesus Christ, just as the book of Revelation commences with the same Name and ends with it.

The particular Greek term translated here as "generation" and meaning birth or origin is the **Greek word "génesis"**. It is used only once in the New Testament – here in this verse – and but once in the Old Testament, which according to the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible known as the Septuagint is found in chapter 5 of Genesis and is regarding the generation of Adam (*note: when the Lord was on earth, He more than likely read the Septuagint*). The one relates to the first Adam, the other relates to the Last Adam. They stand in contrast to each other.

Note: The Greek word itself, when used in the OT and NT, differs from how many times "generation" is translated into English.

The gospel of Luke, on the other hand, traces the genesis of Jesus of Nazareth back to the first Adam. From Jesus back to God is seventy-plus generations. Jesus, the God-man, the perfect man, the perfect servant, is the perfect Lamb of God. Only God can supply and be the sacrifice required, because the righteousness of His Law states that without the shedding of His blood, there is no remission of sins. *Note: That is sins with an "s."*

Matthew 26:26-28 (NKJV) ²⁶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "**Take, eat; this is My body.**" ²⁷ **Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.** ²⁸ **For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."**

What if we envision the darkness described in the Gospel of Matthew as Jesus explained it to us from the Cross? First, the creation response, and Jesus' response. Keep in mind that Jesus has already spoken these words in the heart of David, His anointed king, many centuries beforehand. We must also view this darkness from God's perspective on eternity past, present, and future.

First, creation responds to the event at the Cross.

Matthew 27:45 (NKJV) ⁴⁵ Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over *all the land (earth)*. *Emphasis mine*

The soul of the first Adam, with the seed of the second Adam, responds to darkness.

Psalms 22:1 (NKJV) ¹ A Psalm of David. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? *Why are You so far from helping Me, And from the words of My groaning?*

Jesus speaks and records this saying in Matthew and Mark, demonstrating that He is not only the King of kings but also the Perfect Servant of the Father, carrying out His perfect will.

Matthew 27:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?**" that is, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

Mark 15:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "**Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?**" which is translated, "*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

Jesus' suffering was in the soul; therefore, He shows us the magnitude of the power of darkness can have on the living soul without the Spirit of God manifesting itself from within the spirit. Jesus literally spoke of the hour of the power of darkness.

Luke 22:53 (NKJV) ⁵³ When I was with you daily in the temple, you did not try to seize Me. *But this is your hour, and the power of darkness.* *Emphasis mine*

This condition is something that only Jesus could handle, but He did not look forward to going through it. We should never miss where the location of the darkness will manifest itself, the soul.

Mark 14:34 (NKJV) ³⁴ Then He said to them, "**My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch.**" *Emphasis mine*

The spiritual connection with the Father and the Holy Spirit remains in His Spirit, as they are inseparable. It is this realm of the soul that the prince of darkness attempts to place in the mind of believers that God will forsake them, even though He said He would not. Even David so.

Psalms 139:7-12 (NKJV) ⁷ Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence? ⁸ If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there; If I make my bed in hell, behold, You *are there*. ⁹ If I take the wings of the morning, And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, ¹⁰ Even there Your hand shall lead me, And Your right hand shall hold me. ¹¹ If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me," *Even the night shall be light about me*; ¹² Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You, But the night shines as the day; The darkness and the light *are* both alike to You. *Emphasis mine*

From David's declaration, I can better understand and sense what the soul should feel in the darkness, while still knowing that the Spirit of God is present. Jesus said, "I thirst."

John 19:28 (NKJV) ²⁸ After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "**I thirst!**"

The taste of death and the Lord Jesus suffering this for us on the Cross, yields the hunger and thirst for righteousness. The righteousness is to fulfill all the scriptures about Him. Yep, you guessed it, another Psalm of David.

Psalm 69:20-21 (NKJV) ²⁰ Reproach has broken my heart, And I am full of heaviness; I looked *for someone* to take pity, but *there was* none; And for comforters, but I found none. ²¹ They also gave me gall for my food, *and for my thirst*, they gave me vinegar to drink. *Emphasis mine*

What should become obvious to us is that it is the Son of God in the gospel who is making these statements. It is the Son of God who must make the next statement as well.

John 19:30 (NKJV) ³⁰ So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "**It is finished!**" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Wait, what did ears hear? The Son of God gave up His spirit. What about the last saying? Maybe because His spirit is never separated from the Father, because His soul had to go through the darkness for us. ***Only the Son of Man can say it.***

As the Son of Man, the second Adam, Jesus makes it clear what we must declare. Yes, David spoke these words as well.

Psalm 31:5 (NKJV) ⁵ ***Into Your hand I commit my spirit;*** You have redeemed me, O LORD God of truth. *Emphasis mine*

Luke 23:46 (NKJV) ⁴⁶ And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "**Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'** " Having said this, He breathed His last.

If we know David's history as we should, David becomes our example: even though we are chosen and anointed by God, we do not willingly practice sin,

because the righteousness of God will discipline us. Therefore, before Jesus dies on the Cross, He gives the disciples (*us*) another parable to strive to live a holy life. By doing so, we do not have to fall into the hands of an angry God, or darkness.

The Importance of Godly Stewardship

The Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25:14-30

Brother Dave and Sister Annette Bodi have covered these verses in our Tuesday Bible study, so I do not want to go into much detail. Here are some thoughts from Brother Nee's commentary on these verses. *Unfortunately, it covers a lot.*

This parable is divided into four parts: (a) the householder delivers his goods (vv.14-15); (b) the way the servants handle the talents (vv.16-18); (c) the judgment of both the first and the second servant (vv.19-23); and (d) the judgment of the third servant (vv.24-30).

To study this parable more accurately, we must first understand the difference between our reconciliation with God and our relationship with the Lord. *Why?* Otherwise, we shall not be able to understand clearly the Scriptures but will find difficulties and conflicts in this passage and in many other places in the Bible.

Let us see that before the Father we are children, but before the Lord we are servants (or bondslaves). Through faith we become children; by works we become servants. On the principle of grace, we come to be children; on the principle of responsibility, we come to be servants. We become children through the blessed Son; we become servants by the Holy Spirit. *Okay.*

This passage speaks of the relationship between the servants and the Lord, not of the relationship between the children and the Father. Commencing from Matthew 14, the relationship between children and the Father is no longer mentioned (such a relationship being eternal); only that between servants and the Lord is thereafter presented (such a relationship lasting only until after the millennium). The relationship we have to the Father pertains to salvation and eternity, whereas the relationship we have to the Son pertains to overcoming and kingdom reward. The parable of the talents is related to reward and not to eternity, since the problem of eternity has already been solved. *Well said.*

There is a basic difference between the Old and New Covenants. The Old demands work before life, which means being servants before becoming children. The New Covenant, though, gives life before works, that is to say, being born again before becoming servants. And why? Because God does not want believers to serve Him by their flesh. *Free will as well.*

This parable is different from that in Luke, for in Luke's account, we have our Lord adding this statement: "Trade ye herewith till I come" (Luke 19.13). Here in Matthew's account, the Lord is recorded as not instructing these servants what to do with His goods. He wants us to seek His will and do accordingly. Whoever knows the Lord's will and does it is fit to be rewarded. Not telling the servants what to do is a real test.

What is meant by the word "talent"? Most people will say that the talent represents property, position, influence, time, life, personal character, keen mind, health, church position, and so forth. But we maintain that it speaks of gift, not ability. For (1) a talent is something which Christians have but which the Gentiles (*non-believers*) do not have, because the Lord delivers it to His own slaves and not to anybody else's; (2) a talent is given according to each person's ability and not given casually or indiscriminately; (3) a talent may be increased through earning; (4) it can be taken back; and (5) it is not something which God ordinarily gives to men; rather is it something given by the Lord after His ascension. Based on these five points, we conclude that "talent" cannot refer to property, position, and so forth as is usually understood.

Talent, therefore, is the gift of the Holy Spirit. Emphasis mine

The five-talent servant, the two-talent servant, and the one-talent servant can all be good and faithful.

To be faithful means to do it for the Lord. For whom do we really work? Oftentimes, we seek success, not realizing that if success is not for the Lord, it is but wood, hay, and stubble. The Lord looks for our faithfulness.

The church is like a school in which we learn. After graduation, we are sent to the kingdom to practice what we have learned. *End of commentary for that section.*

Most of us will admit that the greatest thing about being faithful is not the reward.

Matthew 25:23 (NKJV) 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.*'

It is the joy of the Lord in all circumstances. He always determines any reward given, so I guess the joy of the Lord is really our strength.

What about our last guy? It is here that some say, this servant is a nominal, or pretends to be a believer. It's almost as if telling Paul, those Corinthians, and some of the other churches you dealt with are not really Christians.

Nee gives his thoughts on the matter. He begins with a question.

Is the one who receives but with the one talent saved? Of course he is. The reasons are as follows:

- (1) If this man is not saved, then it means that all the saved will be rewarded.
- (2) If this man is not saved, it is as if the Lord were telling us that, however a Christian may fail, he will not be disciplined.
- (3) This man is the Lord's own servant, having been redeemed through His blood; for the Lord will not choose anyone who is unsaved to be His "servant" — *the Holy Spirit, incidentally, never uses incorrect terminology.*
- (4) How can the Lord give His goods to an unsaved person?
- (5) When he is sentenced, this one-talent person is still called a "servant" by the Lord: an "unprofitable" one, yes — *but not a false servant.*
- (6) He is judged for his works and not judged for believing or not believing. If he is not saved, how can the Lord ever judge him for works? He should be judged for despising the precious blood. Moreover, if earning another talent will save, then salvation will not be by faith.

- (7) With whom is he judged? He is judged together with the saved who receive a reward. Will the unsaved be judged with the saved? Before the judgment seat of Christ, only the saved are going to be judged. *The BEMA*
- (8) If the person is unsaved, can the Lord ever blame him for unfaithfulness, for not trading with the gift? Can, for example, the Lord be unhappy with the unsaved for not preaching the gospel? He would much rather not have him preaching the gospel.
- (9) At the coming of the Lord, His servants shall come to Him, which means that they shall be raptured to the air. Can an unsaved person be raptured?
- (10) The Lord has not ordered the servant to be brought in; instead, the servant comes himself because he is the Lord's. An unsaved soul will not dare to see the Lord; he would rather summon the rocks to fall upon him to hide himself from the face of God and of the Lamb. Yet we must notice that this servant has not lost even the one talent which the Lord gave him: he ate his own food and carefully kept the talent for the Lord. He thinks he has done well and has done nothing wrong. *Some say, the Lord knows my heart.*
- (11) This parable agrees with the one in Luke 19.11-27 where the wicked servant (saved, v.22) and the unsaved ("these mine enemies" – v.27) are clearly distinguished and definitely not to be mixed up.

Matthew 25:30 (HCSB) ³⁰ And throw *this good-for-nothing slave* into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.
Emphasis mine

People will ask why the evil servant is cast into outer darkness. They ask, "Isn't this hell? Yet if it is hell, then it should be termed the Lake of Fire, which will appear only after the millennium. Yet this parable speaks of what is to take place before the millennium.

Outer darkness is a relative, not an absolute, term. To understand the word "outer," we need, first of all, to know where the Lord will speak these words. As we have noted earlier, the Lord will come to the air, to where His saints are to be raptured. There they appear before His judgment seat, where these words are spoken. And hence the "outer" spoken of here is "outer" in relation to the air. Never in the Scriptures, not even once, is hell called outer darkness.

Note: Yes, I know, but I'm just sharing. Agreeing on the Cross is enough for me.

As a matter of fact, hell is not dark but has about it the element of fire! Let us see that when the Lord comes, He shall be surrounded by darkness, although there shall be glory within (see Ps. 18.9-11). *Interesting!*

Psalm 18:9-11 (NKJV) ⁹ He bowed the heavens also, and came down With darkness under His feet. ¹⁰ And He rode upon a cherub, and flew; He flew upon the wings of the wind. ¹¹ He made darkness His secret place; His canopy around Him *was* dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies.

And hence the “outer” mentioned in the parable is in relation to this darkness that shrouds the darkness of the Lord’s glory at His coming. *Okay.*

“Weeping” – This term has reference to a repentance on the part of this servant as to his lost opportunity in using the talent properly. *Regret*

“Gnashing of teeth” – Such a servant will murmur against himself for the loss incurred, for *he loses out in the matter of joy and authority.* *Self-blame*

Three elements are closely related: the blood, the cross, and the judgment seat. Although there are no Bible verses plainly connecting these three, both life and experience bear witness to this undoubted link. The cross of Christ stands at the center of the three. *Note: The Cross stands at the center of our time and existence.*

Now, whereas the judgment seat is yet to come, the blood and the cross have already been accomplished. Whatever the blood and the cross miss (that is, whatever sin or failure will not have been dealt with throughout our lives by the blood and the cross), will not be missed at the judgment seat.

What the cross may have missed in our lives ought at least to have passed through the blood (in terms of forgiveness). If a believer anticipates nothing but grace at the judgment seat, then everything will have needed first to have passed through the blood and the cross.

The blood of Christ is for washing and redeeming; it is something much more *objective* to us. The cross, on the other hand, is for crucifying death, sin, the old man, the world, and the old creation. To us, this is far more *subjective*.

Our personal failures may affect two sides: God and the self.

If we sin and our fellowship with God is interrupted, we may be cleansed again and again by the blood and thus have our fellowship repeatedly restored. *The blood deals with sins, while the cross deals with the power of sin.* Through the blood sins are forgiven, but the blood cannot give a guarantee to us never to sin again — nay, not even never to sin the same sin again. And hence the flesh and the world (the power centers of sin) must be dealt with by the cross. The blood forgives, but only the cross can deliver.

All failures and sins throughout our lives that have passed under the blood and been dealt with on the cross will not be judged at the judgment seat.

Indeed, at this seat the Lord will only judge *our undealt with idle words, thoughts, and works*. As penetrating as the light of the judgment seat may be, it can never uncover sins that are already under the blood.

How then do we deal, for example, with the tongue that often delights to indulge in idle words? We need the cross. And the same is true with our unprofitable thoughts and works. They too need the cross.

Let us therefore accept the cross by faith, *reckon* (*account it as a fact*) that this old man was crucified on the cross, and then the judgment seat can never search out for judgment those things in our lives that have already been dealt with by the cross.

Upon being cleansed by the blood with respect to any particular sin or failure, we must turn immediately to the cross; otherwise, there is the possibility of our sinning again, and thus we shall have to be judged at the judgment seat.
End of commentary

I will be the first to admit that “The Mystery of BEMA,” which is Christ Jesus’ evaluation of all believers, is an all-out warfare in its understanding. But there are still many things we know that give us LIGHT to live by.

Our stewardship is based on the measure of the gift we received from Christ.

Ephesians 4:7 (HCSB) ⁷Now grace was given to each one of us *according to the measure of the Messiah's gift*. *Emphasis mine*

Our difficulties may lie in the fact that we do not maintain the whole Body of Christ language in our speaking, nor our actions toward one another.

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NKJV) ¹⁵ but, *speaking the truth IN LOVE, may grow up in all things into Him* who is the head--Christ-- ¹⁶ from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what *every joint supplies*, according to the effective working by which *every part does its share, causes growth of the body* for the edifying of itself in love. *Emphasis mine*

The New Living Translation has a subtitle for **Philippians 2:12-18** titled "Shine Brightly for Christ." In it, we are encouraged to work out our own salvation, or as the NLT says, "work hard to show the results" of the salvation that we have. We get the picture in verses 12-13.

Philippians 2:12-18 (NLT) ¹² Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God with deep reverence and fear. ¹³ *For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him*. *Emphasis mine*

What is primarily missed and not stressed enough in these passages of Scripture is that *God is working in us*, and it is His power that is pleasing to Him. It is in this age of grace that we are willing to walk in the Spirit that guarantees reward in the next age, but the greater reward is the "*Joy of the Lord*."

The overcomer, as most believe, is the one who is born again and has overcome the power of the sin nature.

The "Overcomer," as depicted in Revelation's seven epistles, is one who already has salvation because the letter is written to believers in the church at their location. *To overcome is to overcome the degraded situation of the churches*.

For the church at Ephesus, for example, to overcome is to recover their first love toward the Lord and to hate the works of the Nicolaitans, which is the hierarchy system that the Lord hates.

Revelation 2:4 (NKJV) ⁴ Nevertheless, I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love.

Those who serve God with the need for an intermediary between God and man may have some darkness at work. *The major issue is not perceiving the darkness as being real*; therefore, there is no sense of regret or self-blame.

We notice that the Lord is merciful and patient because of the absence of physical punishment. Christ only points to the *reward* for anyone who has an ear to hear.

Revelation 2:7 (HCSB) ⁷ “Anyone who has an ear should listen to what the Spirit says to the churches. I will give the victor the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in God’s paradise.

We know that in one sense, Israel as a nation is in outer darkness. I don’t want to make any conclusions or go out on a limb, but “Can I say that the church might be experiencing some outer darkness as well?

God allows these things so that we might hunger for the LIGHT to shine, representing God in our dark world.

What is Condemnation to the Lake of Fire?

Condemnation to the Lake of Fire is straightforward in **John 3:18-21**. Jesus said so.

John 3:18-21 (HCSB) ¹⁸ Anyone who believes in Him is not condemned, *but anyone who does not believe is already condemned*, because he has not believed in the name of the One and Only Son of God. ¹⁹ “This, then, is the judgment: The light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone who practices wicked things hates the light and avoids it, so that his deeds may not be exposed. ²¹ But anyone who lives by the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be shown to be accomplished by God.”

Revelation 22:20-21 (NKJV) ²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “*Surely I am coming quickly.*” Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! ²¹ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. **Amen.**