

No.

167.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW:

IS IT JEWISH?

*An Address (revised) at*

Aldgate, E.C.

14th June, 1921.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD.

MEETING ROOM, 61, Upton Lane,  
FOREST GATE, LONDON, E. 7.

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OUTLINE:-

1. The Lord's Use of VARIOUS Servants to write Scripture.
2. The Breaking off of Israel's Branches, and the Present Dispensation.
3. "The Kingdom of the HEAVENS", and its Parables.
4. "The Church" (16.18, 18.17): not Named in other Gospels.
5. Further Notes to the Glory of God.

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Our subject, beloved friends, is rather a large one. It concerns the whole of a book of Scripture and the relationship of that book to other books, but further, I hope it concerns the relation of that book to our hearts. We have all read the Gospel of Matthew - it may be, many times. We all know something of the contents. We could quote verses, and if verses were quoted to us we could locate them. Possibly, we could run through the book chapter by chapter mentally, and "see" what each chapter contains without an open Bible. The Gospel of Matthew is among the best-known books of Scripture, but, how much we all have to learn therein: indeed, I suppose I express the thought of most when I say we recognise one lesson we have to learn, yet still need to learn more - namely, that we have so much to learn. God has been pleased to give us the whole of Scripture. He did not

give it by a sudden handing down from heaven, but during a period of fifteen hundred years. Men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. How different were the conditions of those whom God employed - a Moses trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians yet receiving an advanced course beyond that - as a shepherd in the wilderness; and after this twofold training, being privileged to lead forth Israel and to write the testimony of God. We think of a David trained first as shepherd, and then amid sufferings, and lastly as King, the sweet Psalmist of Israel. But God, Who lifted him up could also use an Amos without lifting him in the same way. The gatherer of sycamore fruit was equally a prophet with Daniel of the royal seed. The fisherman, as Peter, was equally an apostle with Paul the trained Rabbinical student. God was pleased to use different men in different ways at different times, and in mercy He included one Gentile, and we, sinners of the Gentiles by nature, praise God for the use, not only of the Jewish language, but of a Gentile language, even of Greek, and for the gift of two books through the Gentile physician Luke. God's methods are indeed an encouragement to His people; but the grace that used the intensely religious Pharisee also used the taxgatherer; and the taxgatherer, the despised publican, became the writer of that book which is placed first in our New Testament. But whether God employed a Paul or a Matthew, an Amos or a Moses, God was the Causer and Enabler of the work, and thus we have the perfect harmony of all parts of Scripture. Though written by men with different temperaments in different

places at different times, Scripture is without one contradiction. without one error, God's own precious book for His people's study, food, enjoyment and ministry. We praise God for the Scriptures. We know a little about Matthew himself. The Lord laid hold of him and brought him from being a taxgatherer to follow in that path which was NOT remunerative or comparable with the taxgathering path. Matthew soon manifested concern for those who remained as he had been, even as Paul the Pharisee prayed fervently for those who had a zeal for God but not according to knowledge, such as he had shown. Is it not so to-day? Should not the one saved from drunkenness feel a special concern for the salvation of other drunkards? Should not the one saved from other forms of outward sin realise the grace that makes the background of past failure an argument for more powerful prayer?

Thus God over-rules the sins of unconverted days to bring His people to more intensity and a Matthew longs to see other taxgatherers saved. I need hardly add that the Lord uses "taxgatherers" as a type. Luke 15 illustrates this. Pharisees and taxgatherers are there pictured as types of Jews and Gentiles; and a yet clearer example is found in the parable of the two men who went up into the temple to pray -the one a Pharisee and the other a taxgatherer. The taxgatherer and harlots and sinners went into the kingdom before the Pharisees, and they are made typical of those who, as outcasts, have now been brought in from the Gentiles, from those afar off, and the Lord says of those old-time outcasts, "I will in no wise cast

out" - so secure is the salvation of the unworthy and guilty, who are accepted in the Beloved Matthew, therefore, was a type of a saved Gentile. And so it is fitting that he should write a Gospel which shows God's grace in the present dispensation in the setting aside of Israel. We are reminded in Rom. 11 that some of the branches were broken off from the olive. Israel's position was not complete apostasy, for some, not all, were broken off. There remained a remnant, not by merit, but according to the election of grace, and God will reinstate the branches, not the same persons as were broken off, but the spared remainder of the living nation, for the Lord will pardon all whom He reserves of Israel, and the first CHRISTIAN nation will be the nation of Israel, the nation which at present despises His Name. It is a wonderful thought. "Thy people shall all be righteous, the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, that I may be glorified". There will not be one unsaved Jew in that day. All Israel shall be saved. God is able to graft them in again. In accord with this, Paul's prayer in Rom. 10 is yet to be fulfilled. Happy are we if we have prayers like the Lord's in John 17, which are to be fulfilled in the future fully, if only partly in the present. But some branches of Israel were broken off and God was pleased to bring from a wild olive those who are in the real olive and partake of the root and fatness and such stand by faith. It is true that there may be those who appear to be branches but who are not. In accord with this we find that in John 15 the parallel view of the true Vine contains not

one branch which had originally been in the Vine. The word there used implies "broken off", that is to say, broken off from elsewhere. There is no thought of a fruitful branch becoming unfruitful and being removed. If the branch is fruitful it becomes more fruitful, but if the branch is unfruitful it has never been fruitful according to that passage. There is not a word of any change from fruitfulness to unfruitfulness. If therefore a graft-in branch (and ONLY such branches are there mentioned), if a graft-in branch has no fruit, the inference is that it was joined outwardly but not joined inwardly. So there may be those who are associated with the olive yet not inwardly linked with the blessings. But the present time is one in which God is taking out from all nations in a manifest way a people for His Name and He is not saving them VIA Judaism. In the future the nations will say, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem", and as in the days of Esther, many will become Jews. They will call themselves by the name of Israel; but at the present time the Israel of God is composed of those who are saved on the low level of worthless Gentiles. If a Jew is saved, he is saved AS A GENTILE; for the Lord Jesus came to call sinners and not simply Jews or Gentiles. Nationalism is nothing, circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. There is a new creation, and "If any one is in Christ there is a new creation", and we rejoice in this wonderful stress. In accord with this, when the Lord Jesus Christ came, He was preceded by the ministry of John, and John's

ministry appropriately a wilderness ministry set forth God's grace in bringing out of all nations, for God was and is able, from STONES to raise up children of Abraham; and Gal. 3 gives the key to that passage. Moreover, baptism in the river of Jordan set forth God's own wonderful putting aside of the flesh. Unlike circumcision, it denoted a burial, the laying aside of the old - and pictured prophetically a new creation and a rising to walk in newness of resurrection-life, though during the three and a half years that preceded the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, there was much that was transitory and not fully realised. But how wonderfully Judaism as an "ism" was set aside. When John preached the baptism of repentance, the axe was laid, not at the branches of the trees but at the root. The lopping off, or the circumcision of a part was not provided. The axe was laid at the root, and the need was that there should be a new creation. In accord with this, Matthew sets forth in an expression found nowhere else - "the kingdom of the heavens", and John preached this, not as past, not as present, but as about to come. And when the Lord Jesus Christ ministered we are told in chapter 4.17 "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is AT HAND". It had not THEN arrived. I beg you to notice that the coming of John was not the beginning of the kingdom of the heavens. Some have thought that it was so, because of expressions in Matt. 11 and Luke 16. Matt. 11 tells us that from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it

by force, for all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. Undoubtedly there was a crisis, but the Lord explains elsewhere more that is in this passage. The kingdom of heaven is being grapped and violent ones, those who are using power and might, are grasping it.\* The kingdom of the heavens is brought before us in two ways. We have the receiving of the kingdom AND the entering into it. Now the kingdom was undoubtedly received with a doctrinal anticipatory faith before there was the entering into it. When John came, the kingdom was at hand. Christ ALSO said "at hand". Now from the days of John it was being taken with a grasp. That does not say it was being entered, it was still viewed as "at hand". But WHAT is the kingdom of the heavens? Do not let us confuse with the term "kingdom of God". "Oh", you say, "the terms are synonymous" Are they, beloved friends? Is there a single synonym in Scripture? The term "synonym" implies absolute agreement without any added thought. There is the absolute agreement of all Scripture in teaching, but there are often added thoughts, for every expression; and the Lord has never used one expression when another would have done equally well. "But", you say, "we have in one gospel the kingdom of the heavens and in another gospel the kingdom of God; therefore they are the same". By no means. In a dictionary you have one word explaining another -

\* I suppose the very word used here is that from which our English word "power" is derived. It is twice used, for we have the same word "suffering violence" and "violent".

therefore they are the same? Not at all! They, to some extent, cover the same ground, but not entirely. So is it with the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the heavens. The kingdom of the heavens was at hand, but the Lord Jesus Christ said to the Pharisees in Matt. 21. 43 "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation, bringing forth the fruits thereof". Consequently the kingdom of God was possessed by Israel but the kingdom of the heavens was future, whereas Israel possessed in some way the kingdom of God, i.e. the term "kingdom of God" is wider. The "kingdom of the heavens" appears to be one aspect of the kingdom of God. Again, you will remember that in the book of Daniel we read "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men". There we have the kingdom of men, but God is viewed as over all. I was thinking to-day how beautiful it is to notice that the head of gold, the first leader of Gentile powers possessing Jerusalem, the first leader in the image, was COMPELLED to say "He hath His way in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth". He was compelled to acknowledge infinite glory. "None can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?". "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men". To-day there is still the kingdom of men until the stone cut out without hands shall smite the image and it shall be broken, and the kingdoms of this world will become of our Lord and of His Christ and He shall reign. So we have the kingdoms of this world, the kingdom of men. Beloved friends, it is delightful to know the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men. We need not be alarmed

whatever be the result of man's arrangement. There is God's working behind, but God has not at present set up a kingdom which shall break in pieces. Observe, therefore, various <sup>striking</sup> ~~study~~ and different aspects - (a) "The Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men". (b) The kingdom of God given to Israel in the past. (c) The kingdom of the heavens viewed as future when the Lord Jesus came. (d) The Most High setting up a kingdom which shall break in pieces in the future, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord, and Psalm 82 is fulfilled - "Arise, O Lord; for Thou shalt inherit all nations". At the present time the Lord Jesus does not inherit all nations. "Ask of Me and I will give thee the heathen - Thine inheritance". They ARE already His inheritance, but He has not yet taken them. In English we read "Heathen FOR Thine inheritance" - the word "for" is added. Rather "The heathen Thine inheritance" but not till He judges the earth, as Psalm 82. 8 puts it "will He INHERIT all nations". THEN He will smite them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. THEN He will inherit all nations, and will take His right. NOW He is set at the right hand of the Father EXPECTING until His enemies be made His footstool. <sup>and</sup> while He is at the right hand of the Father there is a kingdom which is the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of God has been taken from Israel and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof among whom are believers now, for as the epistle to the Hebrews shows, we are partakers of the HEAVENLY calling, and those who are saved by grace are made to sit

together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus - one of the many parallels between Hebrews and Ephesians which are often so sadly overlooked, for the epistle to the Hebrews like the gospel of Matthew, is dealing with those saved out from Israel to be blessed with believing <sup>Gentiles</sup> ~~Israelites~~ in the new company, gathered out from all nations to be a people prepared for the Lord when He shall return to receive His own unto Himself. The kingdom of the heavens, therefore, was future when Christ's ministry was on earth; consequently in the first parable of Matt. 13 where the sower is the personal Lord Jesus, though he preached the word OF THE KINGDOM, we do NOT read "the kingdom of heaven is like" for the kingdom of heaven was not arranged till the second parable, but then we read "The kingdom of heaven is like unto good seed which a man sowed in HIS field". In Matt. 13, at the outset, it is not "his field". The sower sows, but where? We do not know, yet AFTERWARDS He sows "in his field" - how is this? Another parable explains, i.e. the FIRST parable spoken within the house. This gives the key. The treasure is hid in the field - the man goeth and BUYETH that field. Christ by His death bought the field which is the world, and consequently the second parable is the first of the kingdom of the heavens in which the good seed are likened to the kingdom of the heavens, that is to say, The Lord is viewed there as possessing the kingdom, and His people are seen as a heavenly people waiting the harvest-day which is the end of the age. Here then we have the key to the kingdom of the heavens, and all the parables of the kingdom of the heavens show that there

is this aspect. At the present time we should be a heavenly people, not settling down in the world but called apart from the world, not linked with earth's customs, arrangements, glories, triumphs and power, but willing to enter into the meaning of Divine enjoyment. "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" Hence the Lord Jesus said in John 18 "My kingdom is not out from this world; if My kingdom were out from this world then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but now is My kingdom <sup>not</sup> from hence". Thus the Lord Jesus shows His kingdom has a heavenly aspect. In accord with this, just before His death He said "Now is the judgment of this world". John 12 gives us a climax chapter of the first section of John. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out" - the prince of this world was cast out in connection with Christ's triumph. Christ bought the earth, and consequently inasmuch as He has bought it and He waits till His enemies are made His footstool, He, as King by right, having purchased all, is One whom His people are to own, with whom they are to be rejected outside the camp till He comes back. They cannot now be as Daniel was in connection with Nebuchadnezzar. They do not now sit in the gate, but they are outside the gate where He suffered. They know what it is to be willing to hear the words of their Lord or recollect them "If the world hate you ye know that it hated Me, before it hated you". The kingdom of the HEAVENS, therefore, speaks of a heavenly people and to such Matthew was inspired to address himself and to bring before

us with peculiar definiteness some of the aspects of the present dispensation. Luke brings before us other aspects. For example, Luke, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, gives us a very remarkable view of the present time, for the rescued one is taken to the inn, even to the place that welcomes all, and there is left for two days as the two pence seem to signify. Observe all, "Whatecever thou spendest more ~~WHEN~~ I COME AGAIN I will repay". There we have the position of the Lord's people, as Luke 15 also shows through the ten pieces of silver, in their assembly fellowship and the enjoyment of being together with the readiness to welcome all who have been delivered by the one Redeeming Saviour. But Matthew gives us a very definite view of another character. In the parables of the kingdom, of Matt. 13 we see two aspects. Sometimes we see that which is manifestly devoted to the Lord, as in the treasure hid and in the pearl. Sometimes we see that which is mingled as the tares among the wheat, which are together until the time of the harvest; or we even have the leavening. Now observe that these are alike called the kingdom of the heavens on a principle which runs through all the parables and which nearly every thoughtful believer acknowledges as to these parables. The Lord often speaks of things in accord with that which is professed and claimed, to give a rebuke and a warning. This is acknowledged by most in Matt. 13, but is equally clear as to Luke 15, and equally clear as to the parables which deal with the servants. We need by the grace of God to be clear upon all these points that there may be a full perception of the mind of the

Lord. It is delightful to know that though before men the kingdom of the heavens may be temporarily travestied, and that there may be those who profess the name of the Lord who are not His, yet that before Him the hid treasure remains a treasure unmingled with the world and that the pearl brought about through the piercing and the strain to the One Who created that pearl, is yet to be displayed when brought up from the depths and the glory of that day. The Lord's counsel does not change, and Matthew emphasizes this hidden company, this company known to the Lord, to be displayed in that day. In accord with that, Matt. 22 brings before us the burning of Jerusalem by the armies which the Lord sent, HIS armies, for the expression "Nebuchadnezzar MY servant" is paralleled by the Roman armies. "His armies", but then the purpose of God is not broken. The highways are searched and there is the gathering in. In other words, when the city is burned, there is still a continuation of the Lord's work. The gospel of Matthew is very clear as to the present dispensation. In Matt. 24, in like manner, after the BEGINNING of sorrows, leading up to the siege of Jerusalem, we have from verse 9 to verse 12 the "middle" of sorrows, if I might so call it, and THEN the time of the end. Thus we have the beginning and the middle and the end. The word "beginning" is marked by the word "this", the word "end", by the word "that"; and inbetween you have the description of the present time. In accord with this thought we find that Matthew begins the gospel with the generation of Jesus Christ the Son of David the son of Abraham because we are blessed WITH

believing Abraham as Gal. 3 sets forth. In accord with this, moreover, those who come to the Lord Jesus Christ in THIS gospel, are wise men from the east, Gentiles, for Matthew shows most definitely the bringing together of the Gentiles. It is, as most are aware, the only gospel that mentions the church by name. It is a gospel in which Matthew was inspired to show that the setting aside of Israel temporarily was not the setting aside of the purpose of God. God has a plan of grace which is to those of all nations who are brought near in the precious blood of Christ, and we have already noticed the stress in Matt. 3 on God's might in raising up children to Abraham from the very stones. Nor must we forget that Matthew brings before us Christ's journey down to Gentile Egypt, and His living in Galilee of the Gentiles is emphasized, and He is called a NAZARENE. This is the stress throughout the book, and in accord with it, and in accord generally with the Lord's work, it is remarkable that the first four apostles brought before us in their second "calling" to service, are associated with the sea, the sea suggesting the Gentiles and the nations as other Scriptures would show, and the fish typical of the Lord's work among every race, as Matt. 13 indicates. Hence "fishers of men" in Luke 5. The gospel of Matthew is full of teaching as to the ingathering of the Gentiles and obviously there was a wonderful reason why the Lord used the publican, the saved taxgatherer to write such a gospel with this clear testimony of encouragement to Gentile believers. "But", you say, "is it not probable that Matthew wrote his gospel completely for Jewish

believers?" Very likely, for they were the ones who needed to be so instructed. The Gentile believers were their brethren, The Jewish believers were the ones who needed to be instructed that they were not to take the position of a Jewish remnant but that grace had brought together Jewish and Gentile remnants in the present dispensation, as one in Christ Jesus. And, therefore, it was fitting that the saved taxgatherer should instruct his brethren according to the flesh. - who would not naturally have listened to a taxgatherer; it was appropriate that he who was saved from serving the Romans should speak of the Roman armies being used by the Lord to destroy the city and should explain that the Lord would save out from all nations, including a Roman centurion, who is so specially emphasized IMMEDIATELY after the address on the mount - save out from all nations a people for Himself. The address on the mount is obviously a declaration of principles which concern the present time. Some have thought this millennial, but, beloved friends, I hardly think we anticipate that in the millennium we shall rejoice when men revile us and persecute us and when we are persecuted for righteousness' sake. Such words indicate the PRESENT time. You will observe furthermore that this passage begins with "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens". Here is the glorious encouragement for God's dear people, and the Lord shows the principles that would govern the kingdom of the heavens in this present and future aspect, for the future aspect also is found, e.g. in verse 19 where there will be a calling great in the kingdom of the heavens .

in that day. The entering into the kingdom of the heavens is seen as future in verse 20 though the principles of the kingdom of the heavens were to be then received. I suppose we notice how that the Lord takes up certain allusions to Jewish arrangements, (in verse 22 for example), and shows their application in a different and fuller way as to the present time. Among Israel, one who killed was in danger of judgment, but among the Lord's people, one who is angry is in danger - so solemn are the principles of the kingdom of the heavens, and so real is the judgment-seat of Christ. I need hardly say Christ takes up terms known among Israel and gives them a new meaning. This would be a helpful study. The Hebrew salutation "Peace" is invested with a new force. The meaning of the word "scribes" is changed. We read of every scribe instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens. In like manner we have brought before us here a new aspect of the council. That this is the principle of Christ's language is clear. What is the word for Gehenna? It is the term "the valley of the son of Hinnom". Did Christ mean the valley of the son of Hinnom outside Jerusalem, or that of which it was a type? Evidently that of which it was a type. In like manner, ALL the Jewish arrangements of council and synagogue were made types of that which the Lord appointed. This makes the more remarkable that He arranged a contrast with the sacrificial plans of the temple, that His people might enter into contrasts as well as parallels: hence there is no order of priesthods, nor have we an altar. We find further at the end of the address on

the mount that a leper is at once blessed - a type of one outside. Then the centurion already mentioned. Do you not see grace to the Gentiles? Soon we find the Lord crossing the sea and on the other side in the neighbour<sup>hood</sup> of Gentilised Decapolis is delivered from demon power - and another, possibly less known, is delivered at the same time, and the herd of swine run violently into the sea - a fit picture of those who are unsaved. Thus grace lays hold of the unlikely and those who despise the Truth are under judgment. Here we have the principles of the gospel of Matthew, until we reach the mention of the church (Matt. 16) viewed as future, then mark the Divine language "Thou art Peter", a stone related to the Rock, (the word from the same root), one in full union with Christ. Christ refers to that which was explained fully in His resurrection work. "Thou art Peter, and upon THIS Rock I WILL build My church and the gates of Hades shall not have strength to hold it down". Here the Lord Jesus plainly alludes to Himself in the word "Rock" and may allude again in the added words - for the word "rock" is in the same gender as the word "against IT". "The gates of Hades shall not have strength to hold It, the Rock, down". The Rock shall be raised up from the waters of judgment and Christ on resurrection ground will become the Basis of His people. There may be the further thought that all His true people will not be held down by Hades. And why not? When He died and rose, He removed from one place to another those who "all their lifetime were subject to bondage", and now in Corinthians the words of triumph ring out - not, "O Hades,

O death" but "O death, O death", as you will notice 1 Cor. 15 should be rendered, though the copyist could not understand, and altered it back in some of the copies to identify with the prophecy of Hosea, and put in the word "Hades", but the Holy Spirit definitely reminds us there that when the Lord Jesus returns, none of His saints will then be in Hades. THEN, indeed, and not till then, shall be fulfilled "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O death, where is thy victory?" - but it is not "O Hades" because ALREADY the victory is over Hades, but the future victory is over DEATH. The repeated stress is upon deliverance from the power of death as to the body, which has not yet been reached, for we are still in mortal bodies which are sown in corruption if so be that it pleases our Lord for us to fall asleep. To return "The gates of Hades shall not have strength against it". Thus the Lord brought before His disciples <sup>the</sup> deliverance of His people and their position in heavenly places. The old-time saints were brought from Hades to Paradise when He died and rose again, and now saints do not go into Hades (see Heb. 2.14). This entirely fits with what the Lord says. Observe the added words "I will give unto thee the keys of heaven and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven". In other words, as in Acts 10, the Lord's people are to ratify or rather recognise His decisions. He decides first, It shall HAVE BEEN BOUND IN heaven; so "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common"

an allusion to this passage. The keys of the kingdom of heaven bring before us the practical and responsible outworking of that which is described first in connection with the church. "I will build My church" views the Lord's people as to relationship and united WORSHIP; the kingdom of heaven having a key as well as a house with an economy and a responsibility and principles of OBTIENANCE. The Lord's people are now to live as members of the kingdom of heaven, governed along on the line of principles which are foreign to the world. They do not seek to get on in the world, they seek to live to please their Lord. Earthly advancement has no real attraction for them for they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, and are kept with their minds stayed upon Him. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world". A chain may be golden but it is a chain and the Lord's redeemed desire to have their mind set on things above, not on things on the earth. They are in the kingdom of the heavens and they would rather lose everything that earth can give than lose that which their Lord gives. That is their hidden wish and they desire it to be less hidden and more manifest by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the daily circumstances of a life where they are so often deflected by surroundings, and led astray from their true purpose and object which the Lord has made dear to their hearts. Thus we find in Matt. 18 that the Lord again brings before us the principles of the church. Here we read with respect to a local assembly, "If he shall neglect to hear thee, tell it unto the church, but if he neglect to hear the church let him be unto

thee as a heathen man and a publican". We thank God that Matthew wrote that. The saved taxgatherer knew what it signified "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican". Some have thought that this means "Let him be as a heathen man and a publican is to thee". But that would be hardly in accord with other Scriptures. The Lord Jesus did not mean that His people were to treat heathen men and publicans in the same way as those who despised the Truth after having known it. The Holy Spirit said of those who despise His Truth "with such an one <sup>no</sup> ~~eat~~ not to eat", but with a heathen man and a publican there might be a wise and holily separate going TO them, not for indulgence, not for enjoyment, but to bring the gospel to them. "Let it be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" - that is to say, the terms known among Israel for rejection. As these men were to Israel SO let him be unto thee. Let him be the one who is put on one side if he rejects hearing the testimony of God. Why? " whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall HAVE BEEN BOUND in heaven". An assembly to receive the name must seek to be included in 1 Tim. 3 a pillar and ground of THE Truth, else does it not soon cease to be an assembly? It binds that which has been bound in heaven. Thus we have the united assembly in Matt. 16 and the local assembly in Matt. 18, and a stress on the Lord's gracious interest in both. There are other words which show the character of this gospel. For example, in Matt. 28 we have "Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things

whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you all the days even unto the end of the age". There the Lord emphasizes His authority over all the nations and His care for saving out of all the nations a people for Himself who are brought into the Name - and this leads up unto the end of the age. Matthew's gospel therefore is not Jewish, but a gospel in which Matthew brings before us God's salvation FROM Jew and Gentile of a people who are brought into a NEW kingdom of the heavens, who are brought to realise, or should be brought to realise, the meaning of the word "church", or "called-out company". The parallel is with the church in the wilderness, the type which God gave to Israel, but it is a HEAVENLY parallel and while saints wait for their rejected Lord, they are to be as the treasure hid in the field, and at the end of the present dispensation will be likened unto virgins not compared with the woman of Rev. 17, not in the harlot system, but likened unto virgins, who go out to meet the Bridegroom who have their mind set upon Christ and thus upon heavenly hope and the manifestation of a heavenly kingdom on earth. Undoubtedly Matthew encourages us by showing us the Lord will save from Israel. You have a beautiful picture of this in Matt. 24. There we find in the time of the end one of those many Scripture-pictures full of wonderful instruction. You know how that the gospels give us details of different days in Christ's life, and in accord with this in the book of Revelation, we have the view of the last three and a half years, first at one part of the world, then at another part of the world - in the wilderness, then at Jerusalem - different views. In Matt. 24 you

have an encouraging view of Palestine and the Lord shows He will save from among Jews, and believers are encouraged to pray that their flight may not be in the winter nor on the sabbath; and why? Because the temple will have been rebuilt. The Lord does not say to them "You are on Jewish ground and therefore will not flee on the sabbath" No, He plainly implies that they would flee in any case - "your flight", but because the winter would hinder them from without and because the religious Jews would obstruct when fanned to fury because Antiochrist sets up his image. He exhorts His people to pray that their flight may not be in the winter or on the sabbath when the hindrances, would either through the weather or through others, are alike from without. Christ does not say "Pray ye that the time of your flight may not come then because you would not like to flee or because it would then be Divinely forbidden". The children of God brought before us are not viewed as governed by seventh day laws themselves, but they are surrounded by others. Thus the Lord in Matt. 24 shows a definite and beautiful contrast with anything of Jewish ground, and He chose MATTHEW to give such a clear witness that until the tribulation is finished the Lord Jesus is dealing with those who are made a heavenly people who will consequently be caught up to meet the Lord afterwards. Observe the striking thought which is very definitely mentioned, "THEN shall all the tribes of the land mourn". The Lord begins to deal with an earthly people immediately AFTER the tribulation and not before. This is exactly the case in Rev. 6. As soon as there is the sixth unsealing, we have

the Lord dealing with an earthly people, for the twelve thousand of each tribe are sealed upon earth in Rev. 7. This is in accord with the whole of Scripture. I do not mean that the Lord is not preparing Israel before. The Lord will use the preparatory time, undoubtedly, but they will be sealed at this period. How? The sealing is the sealing of the Spirit, and at the time when the tribulation finishes there is a further pouring out of the Spirit to fulfil Zech. 12. Some have thought that this is a different aspect; but observe "I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication". Hence the spared ones are SEALED as such in Rev. 7, and the Lord deals with an EARTHLY people, having dealt with a HEAVENLY people up till that period. In accord with this, Dan. 7 brings before us the two classes. There are the saints of the high places who are the partakers of the kingdom of the heavens, and there are also the people of the saints of the high places. Now, as to the saints of the high places, we are told judgment is given, and they possess the kingdom, but as to the people of the saints of the high places, the kingdom is given unto them UNDER the whole heaven. The saints of the high places have a kingdom without any limitation, not UNDER the whole heaven. They have a heavenly position as well; but the PEOPLE of the saints of the high places have at that time an EARTHLY kingdom, under the whole heaven. And thus we have the time when the Lord will gather together His heavenly and earthly people in the day when the heavenly Jerusalem shall be manifested, and the Jerusalem

which will be raised up and beautiful for elevation, in the holy land again chosen, shall be a praise in the whole earth, for the Divine Architect has the plans. The walls are continually before Him; He will arise and have favour upon Zion, when the set time shall come, and as His servants take pleasure in the stones and favour the dust thereof, they can say from their hearts, with David, "Do good in Thy good pleasure<sup>ye</sup> unto Zion; build Thou the walls of Jerusalem". Thus we find, beloved friends, that the purpose of God in the present dispensation, does not set aside His purpose to choose Jerusalem and choose Israel again, but it is in accord with His will and the present period that the branches should be broken off, and that there should be a bestowal of MERCY, not reward, upon all, whether Jew or Gentile, that those who are saved might make manifest "It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that showeth mercy". He is gathering out of all nations those who are no longer of any nation but a nation bringing forth the fruits of the Kingdom, which were not a people but now are the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy, and who are therefore exhorted as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having their conversation honest among the GENTILES for they are <sup>no</sup> longer of the Gentiles but are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people with a view to the making around their Lord, that in the ages to come He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness on to them in Christ Jesus. That is the

glorious plan which is so wondrously prophesied in Matthew with its showing forth of the Divine purpose and involving the encouragement to a practical life in the power of the Holy Spirit, and a unity of believers on a line of the Lord's will, while they continually say from their hearts, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus".

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