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A People gathered unto Shiloh

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by Mr. H. DAWSON, of Bethersden

A PEOPLE GATHERED UNTO SHILOH

Genesis 49.10.

“And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.”

This is a word which stands in a wonderful connection with the concluding chapter in Jacob's life. Jacob had lived a very chequered life, and had been brought through great and sore troubles but he could declare “God hath dealt graciously with me.” When the words of our text dropped from godly Jacob's lips the dear man was on his dying bed, as the opening word in the chapter tells us: “And Jacob called unto his sons, and said: “Gather yourselves together that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days, gather yourselves together and hear, ye sons of Jacob and hearken unto Israel your father.” This is a wonderful picture to contemplate, for Jacob was old and decrepit, but all that Jacob was by nature seems to be subjugated, and what Jacob was by the grace of God was uppermost. In reading down the chapter you will see that Jacob was inspired of God to speak to his sons one by one, and speak concerning them as to what the future would unfold as they journeyed on through life what was the purpose of God concerning each one; and when he comes to the immediate context he is speaking to Judah, and he comes to this blessed declaration: “The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” This beautiful name, Shiloh, refers to Jesus Christ, He it is Who is the blessed centre and circumference in the Word of God. “And unto Him,” because of Who He is, verily God, verily Man:

“Whom though we cannot comprehend,
Knowing Thou art the sinners' Friend,
We love Thee, and adore.”

“Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” If the time allowed it would be instructive to look a little further into the setting of the subject, as to how this word was ultimately fulfilled, but as you read the Word of God throughout Old Testament history, there was a lawgiver in Judah until the time that Jesus Christ was born a babe “By birth mysterious.” You will remember that when Jesus Christ was doing that work He came into the world to do there was one occasion when the Pharisees sought to ensnare the dear Saviour, and entangle Him by their argument, and in confounding them the Saviour said: “Show Me a penny,” and they shewed Him a penny, and

he said: “Whose is the superscription thereon?” and they said: “Caesars,” and He said: “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars, but unto God the things which are God's.” Now that shewing of the penny with Caesar's head upon it revealed that this word that Jacob foretold nearly seventeen hundred years before upon his dying bed was fulfilled in the letter of it. Shiloh had now come, yet, when He came “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” He came unto His own land, as the land of promise, and His own people dwelling therein received Him not.

I want as the Lord shall help me to look at the subject from one or two viewpoints: “And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” How wonderful it is to see Jacob, now he is old, so favoured to look forward through the ages to come and see when Jesus Christ should be coming down into this world “God made manifest in the flesh,” and to see what would be the blessed outcome of His coming: “And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.” Leaving Jacob, I want to say something first of all about **The People gathered**: “And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be,” for some of you have been concerned for a long while that you might belong to the people in the text. O, you have said before God often:

“With them numbered I would be
Now, and in eternity.”

You have sent up many a petition maybe using the words of the Psalmist: “Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that Thou bearest unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation.” It is well to remember that this world in which you and I live and move is being run by God on purpose that these people in the text may be gathered at Jesus' feet, saved by grace, and crown Him Lord of all. These people are marked people, and it is a concern of each one born again to know that he does possess those marks and evidences which will make it manifest that he does, of a truth, belong to the people in the text. I read a word to you, a great word, “And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,” and so these people, first of all, are **quickened** people. I might have said, it needs to be said, the people in the text are **chosen** people, before the world was built or time was born, ordained to life eternal. These people, for whom the world was built, are not gathered together by chance, or haphazard, but it is in accordance with a covenant “ordered in all things and sure,” a covenant of grace; and, when these people are born into the world, they have to be born to be born again. Remember that. There comes a time in the life of each one of these people when they are quickened, born again; — a wonderful mercy, and it needs to be said also, a

wonderful miracle. If you look round the world and view it in all its chaos and confusion, and the mighty mass of mankind, I say, dear friends, is it not a miracle that you should be where you are, and what you are, and made to differ from the world at large, and be found in the attitude of worship, asking the way to Zion with your faces thitherward. You might have remained as you were born, in the world and of it, living after the flesh, the things of the flesh, but it can be said of you: "And you," poor sinners, undeserving, hell-deserving as you are, "And you hath He quickened, who dead in trespasses and sins;" I say it is a mercy, and it is a miracle, a miracle of grace. When these people are made manifest as being the people in the text, quickened people, their eyes are opened, and their hearts are opened, and they are made aware of what they are by nature as sinners: "The entrance of Thy Word giveth light;" "When He the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall convince the World of sin." Can you remember, dear friends, when this miracle was wrought in you. When you felt as you never felt before? When you were quickened into life divine? It is a wonderful mercy, and with quickening there comes travail ultimately — soul travail, and if you think of that illustration, which is very apposite, that when a mother is going to bear a babe, all the pains she is the subject of then, all the travail, has got one issue, that is life. It is the only pain you can think about beneath the sun that issues in life, all other pains known and felt ultimately issue in death, but travail is to do with life; and so it is when a sinner is born again, and quickened into life divine, what he feels, though he is sore pained at times because he is the sinner that he is, yet:

"The heart once hard as steel
That's made for sin to feel,
Bears tokens of a ransomed soul."

Yes, the people in the text are quickened people, and that issues in them being known as **praying** people. "Behold he prayeth," blessed sign of life divine; can you look back, and remember when you began to knock at mercy's door, and when you felt:

"I hunger now for heavenly food,
And my poor soul cries out for God?"

From that day to this you have been trying to pray; you may not feel as you would like to feel about your attempts to pray, none of us do, yet the Word of the Lord is: "Pray without ceasing," and although you often feel:

"I would, but cannot pray,"

yet you keep trying to pray. These people in the text live their lives like that.

"Ever on thy Captain calling,
Make thy worst condition known;
He shall hold thee up when falling,
Or shall lift thee up when down."
"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Then I would say that these people in the text are **separated** people; they are set apart for God, with Whom they have to do. You can discern it in what the Word of God records of Moses, when he was made manifest as belonging to the people in the text, the Word of God says: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." The Psalmist brings forth another evidence too: "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the House of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." These people in the text are separated people, and can no longer live the life they used to live before being born again. No longer do they seek to be first of all "After the flesh, the things of the flesh," but they desire to be "After the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." Separated people! Sometimes this evidence is so clear-cut in their souls' experience that they can look round the world in which they live and move, and think on all it has to offer, and then they can appeal to God, with Whom they have to do:

"Let others after earth aspire,
Christ is the treasure I desire."

Separated people! The Word of God speaks of these people in the text: "I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people," and when ever you meet any of them you will find that is one hallmark which makes them to be manifest as belonging to the people; **afflicted**, and their chief affliction is that they are what they are by nature. It is a great affliction to be a sinner, and to know that as long as you live you will be a sinner, and prove, according to your feelings: "Turn again, son of man, and see greater iniquities than these;" and every day be made aware that you are a bigger sinner than you were the day before: "From the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores;" and you have to lament:

"I dare not promise future good to bring,
My heart deceitful is indeed."

It is an affliction that when you would be holy you have to

lament: "I would do good, but evil is present with me." These people in the text are made sensible sinners, yet, in the lives they live, they are what the Word of God says: "And they shall be called an holy people;" they live the life of the righteous, and desire to do that which is right in the sight of the Lord. Godly fear energises them, as

"An unctuous light to what is right,
And a bar to what is wrong."

Yes, the people in the text are not only an afflicted people, because of their affliction they are indeed a **poor** people; you can hear them confessing: "I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me;"

"To Thee I come, a sinner poor,
And wait for mercy at Thy door."

"And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." These people in the text, I have hinted at it already, are a **sanctified** people, which is that they are set apart for God, and in a right mind they desire to live unto God:

"This prayer and this ambition mine,
Living and dying to be Thine,"

and you will ever discern the people in the text to be a **humble** people. You will not find these people broadcasting who they are, and what they have done, and what they still propose to do, but they "Humble themselves under the mighty hand of God," with whom they have to do, and at times are brought to "put their mouths in the dust of self abasement, if so be there may be hope." I might add that whilst these people in the text are a separated people, yet they are also a **united** people. "The love of the brethren" brings them into "The unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." There is a striking word in Jeremiah concerning these people in the text: "I will give them one heart, and one way," and so you find any of these people, with whom you may have to do, when they tell out the dealings of God with their soul, you can walk in agreement with them therein, and you can love them as brethren. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." They are a united people seeing they flow together to the goodness of the Lord: "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." I might have said, and it should be said, that the people in the text are a **tried** people; "The Lord trieth the righteous." They are tried within, tried by what they are by nature as sinners, and they are tried by earth and hell from without — a tried people. Then

the Word of God says: "Ye are My witnesses." That is a word that needs to be weighed up — "Ye are My witnesses." These people in the text witness in their lips and lives Whose they are, Whom they serve, and they delight to do it as grace is given. **You should be concerned to do it:**

"Hoard up the sacred Word,
And feed therein, and grow;
Go on to seek to know the Lord,
And practice what you know."

Witnessing that you are on the Lord's side, especially in these tremendous times in which we live. Much might be said about the people in the text, and these marks stamped upon them to make them manifest as the people of God, but I look at the subject from another viewpoint: "And unto Him shall the **gathering** of the people be." This word "gathering" needs to be considered aright; it is a gathering to a centre, and that centre is Shiloh, Jesus Christ in all that He is, all that He has done, all that He still does as the sinners' Friend; but this gathering denotes Divine sovereignty: "Where two or three are **gathered** together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" gathered together with a motive, an aim,

"What is the house to me,
Unless the Master I can see."

"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." It is wonderful in searching the Scriptures, and discerning how the Church of Christ has been built up through the ages, how the Holy Spirit — blessed be His Name, has been working every day gathering the people unto Him — unto Jesus Christ, our Lord. "And the Lord added unto the church daily, such as should be saved." "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." I look at this "gathering": There are some characteristics of it, it is not just an assembling together, it is a gathering first of all made in time in preparation for a gathering ultimately in eternity, such is the history of the Church of Christ down through the ages. There must be millions and millions untold of sinners saved by grace, whose redeemed spirits are:

"Around the throne of God in heaven",—

gathered unto Him rejoicing "In the rest that remaineth for the people of God," but then the Word of God says: "And yet others shall be gathered together unto Him," and that should be our concern; "Let Thy work appear unto Thy servants, and Thy glory unto their children." First of all, these people in the text

as they are gathered together, each one, every one is gathered before Jehovah's bar, which is the law. "When He, the Spirit of Truth is come, He shall convince the world of sin," and the Word of God says: "All the world shall become guilty before God, and every mouth be stopped," and with the people in the text, that is done in this life; but with those, who do not belong to the people in the text, it will be brought to pass when they come down to die, and appear before the judgment seat of Christ, then the mouth of every sinner shall be stopped, and the whole world of the godless become guilty before God, and hear that dread sentence: "Depart from Me, ye cursed, I never knew you." What a mercy if you can discern in looking back over the dealings of God when you were gathered under the law, and brought in guilty before God with whom you have to do, and you came to that place called "The stopping of the mouth," and felt: "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand." "The stopping of the mouth"—not one good work could you plead, so that if heaven could have been gained for a good thought you must give up all thought of going through the gates of pearl, because being what you are by nature: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? Not one." It is very solemn to be gathered at Sinai's mount, and hear the echoes of the law's loud thunders, then to be brought to "the stopping of the mouth," and declare:

"If my soul is sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."

Not all are taught that line of things, by terrible things in righteousness, but all the people in the text are taught the truth of it, and made to acknowledge:

"Not the labour of my hands,
Can fulfil the law's demands."

"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." The people are gathered too under the Gospel, and what a sweet privilege it is to be found under the Gospel, where it is set forth as "Good tidings of great joy." Those who have been gathered, as I have said, before Sinai's mount:

"Stripped of all their fancied meetness,
To approach the dread I AM,"

how glad they are when the Spirit of God gathers them under the Gospel, gathers them before Calvary's Cross, and makes known to them: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one which believeth." O, that is a sweet experience,

and this is the way the people of God are led into the truth:

"Convince us of our sin,
Then lead us to Jesu's Blood,
And to our wondering view reveal
The secret love of God."

To be gathered at Calvary's Cross! What a wondrous privilege:
"Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,"
Which before the Cross I spend!"

Then being gathered under the Gospel means that they are gathered where the Gospel is preached, gathered in the House of Prayer, and they go there with willing feet. They have deep down in their hearts a concern:

"We love the place, O God,
Wherein thine honour dwells;
The joy of thine abode,
All earthly joy excels!"

David said: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth;" "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts." "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." You find as these people are gathered with willing feet, as I have said, in the House of Prayer, they gather unto Him Whose House it is:

"Jesus, we come to meet
With Thee, our Lord and King;
To sit at Thy dear feet,
And here Thy praises sing;
Compassion have on us, we pray,
And empty send us not away."

"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be!" Remember, whoever the preacher is, you should be concerned in the worship of God to see no man, "Save Jesus only." "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." "I would hear what God the Lord would say" for my soul's peace and profit. Then sometimes these people of God are gathered round the Lord's table, and that is a privilege to prize:

"Beggars approach My royal board,
Furnished with all that's good;
Come sit at table with your Lord,
And eat celestial food."

You have said, some of you, "Lord, it is good for us to be

here;" and you will prove that word of the Psalmist: "The meek shall eat, and be satisfied, and shall increase their joy in the Lord." When you do not always feel happy under the Gospel, and feel that the Word of the Lord is especially for you, you are still under the blessing of the Lord: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

I would like to emphasise this as I come along toward the Amen, the people in the text are gathered in the fellowship of the saints; "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another and the Lord hearkened and heard it;" and it is good to know:

"Saints' fellowship, if it be managed well,
Will keep the saints awake,
And that in spite of hell;"

"He that loveth is born of God." There is a word here which I sometimes say is equivalent to Jacob's epitaph. When the dear man had made an end of commanding his sons he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, "And was gathered unto his people," and that is a wonderful epitaph. You will be gathered unto the people that you belong to; if the people you belong to on this side of the grave are the people in the text, then you will be found among that people on the other side of the grave; but if the people you belong to are those that are in the world and of it, then you will be found amongst such a people when you die. Remember that. "And was gathered unto his people." "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." They are gathered under the Gospel, and led into the truth, seeking to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Gathered unto Him, Who is declared to be Shiloh, and that word means "Peacemaker," "He who is sent." You will remember in the Hebrews' epistle: "Wherefore, holy brethren, consider the Apostle, and High priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;" — The Apostle, the One Whom God has sent. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He, Who is Shiloh, declares: "My peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall possess your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus." Shiloh! "And unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Remember that every day throughout the world the people in the text are being gathered into the realms of bliss. Every day there is a multitude who have done with time and time things going down into Jordan's swelling, finding the bottom to be good, and entering in through

the gates of heaven to dwell for ever with the Lord, realising "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." I might add this: when the last day shall dawn, and it will inevitably dawn, then, the Word of God tells us, on the resurrection morning "The dead in Christ shall rise first," and what a gathering that will be! Then this word will be fulfilled: "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." O, I have thought when the dead in Christ shall arise on the resurrection morning, as they come forth from their graves with their redeemed bodies, tenanted with their redeemed spirits, how they will say one to another "Good morning!" and such a morning is the opening of an everlasting day. It says here (I will read it to you because it is instructive): "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory; And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left." Remember, dear friends, you and I will be there — a very solemn consideration — you and I will be in this assembly when before Him shall be gathered all nations; on which side of the Son of Man shall you and I be found? "The sheep on His right hand, the goats on the left." You and I will be on one side, or the other. I like how one hymnwriter speaks about it:

"Shepherd Divine, blest Son of God,
Among Thy sheep redeemed by blood,
Oh, may my soul at last be found,
And with eternal life be crowned."

"Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." The Lord grant in His infinite mercy that you and I may be numbered with the people in the text, and then it will be our everlasting joy to be found with Jesus Christ, when He appears before His Father: "Behold I, and the children whom Thou hast given Me."

Amen.