

Jeremiah 10:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD: therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.

Analysis

This verse indicts leaders: 'For the pastors are become brutish, and have not sought the LORD.' 'Pastors' (ro'im, רֹעִים, shepherds) are political and religious leaders. 'Brutish' (nivaru) indicates stupid, senseless—lacking understanding their position required. 'Not sought the LORD' (lo dareshu eth-YHWH) means they failed to inquire of God for guidance. 'Therefore they shall not prosper, and all their flocks shall be scattered.' Leadership failure produces national disaster—shepherds' foolishness scatters their sheep. The promised consequence—lack of prosperity and scattered flocks—exactly describes exile's result.

Historical Context

Jeremiah frequently indicts Judah's 'shepherds'—kings, priests, prophets who misled the nation (2:8, 23:1-4, 25:34-36). The shepherd metaphor was common ancient Near Eastern royal imagery. Judah's final kings (Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah) exemplified failed leadership—ignoring prophetic warning, pursuing foolish alliances, bringing destruction upon their 'flock.'

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What marks 'brutish' leadership that fails to 'seek the LORD'?
2. How does leadership failure multiply suffering throughout the community?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	נִבְעָרוּ	הָרֹעִים	וְאֵת	יְהוָה	לֹא
H3588	are become brutish	For the pastors	H853	the LORD	H3808
	H1197	H7462		H3068	
וְלֹא	דָּבַשׁוּ	עַל	כֵּן	הַשֹּׁכֵי יָלֹדוּ	וְכָל
	and have not sought	H5921	H3651	therefore they shall not prosper	H3605
	H1875			H7919	
מִרְעֵיתָם	נִפְּוֹצָה:				
and all their flocks	shall be scattered				
H4830	H6327				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 12:10 (Parallel theme): Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.

Jeremiah 2:8 (References Lord): The priests said not, Where is the LORD? and they that handle the law knew me not: the pastors also transgressed against me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

Jeremiah 8:9 (References Lord): The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the word of the LORD; and what wisdom is in them?

Jeremiah 10:8 (Parallel theme): But they are altogether brutish and foolish: the stock is a doctrine of vanities.

Zechariah 13:7 (References Lord): Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones.

Zechariah 10:3 (References Lord): Mine anger was kindled against the shepherds, and I punished the goats: for the LORD of hosts hath visited his flock the house of Judah, and hath made them as his goodly horse in the battle.

Ezekiel 34:12 (Parallel theme): As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

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