

Jeremiah 13:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north:
where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?

Analysis

This verse personifies Jerusalem: 'Lift up your eyes, and behold them that come from the north.' The command addresses Jerusalem (feminine singular) to observe approaching enemy. 'Them that come from the north' identifies Babylon. 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' The Hebrew eder (עדר, flock) represents Judah's population, Jerusalem's 'beautiful flock' (tson tiph'artekh) entrusted to her care. Jerusalem was responsible for her people like a shepherd for sheep. 'Given thee' (nittan lakh) indicates stewardship responsibility. The question is accusatory: where are those you should have protected?

Historical Context

Jerusalem as responsible shepherd for Judah's population echoes the shepherd/flock imagery throughout Jeremiah (2:8, 10:21, 23:1-4, 25:34-36). The leaders of Jerusalem—kings, priests, prophets, nobles—were responsible for the nation's welfare. Their failure led to the flock's destruction. The approaching enemy would scatter the sheep Jerusalem should have protected.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. What does the shepherd/flock imagery suggest about Jerusalem's leadership responsibility?
2. How does the accusatory question 'where is your flock?' indict failed stewardship?

Interlinear Text

שָׁאֵ	עִינֵיכֶם	וְרָא	בָּאָ	יְמָ	מִצְפָּה	וְיִ	אֵי	הָ
Lift up	your eyes	and behold	them that come	from the north				H346
H5375	H5869	H7200	H935		H6828			
בְּעֵדֶר	נָתָן	לְהָ	צָאֵן	תִּפְאַרְתָּהּ				
where is the flock	that was given	H0	flock	thee thy beautiful				
H5739	H5414		H6629	H8597				

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 6:22 (Parallel theme): Thus saith the LORD, Behold, a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth.

Jeremiah 23:2 (Parallel theme): Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 1:14 (Parallel theme): Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land.

Habakkuk 1:6 (Parallel theme): For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not their's.

Jeremiah 10:22 (Parallel theme): Behold, the noise of the bruit is come, and a great commotion out of the north country, to make the cities of Judah desolate, and a den of dragons.

Jeremiah 13:17 (Parallel theme): But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride; and mine eye shall weep sore, and run down with tears, because the LORD'S flock is carried away captive.

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