

# Jeremiah 23:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And I will gather the remnant of my flock out of all countries whither I have driven them, and will bring them again to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase.

## Analysis

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After pronouncing judgment on the false shepherds, God declares He Himself will shepherd His people. The emphatic 'I will gather' contrasts with the shepherds who scattered. This introduces the remnant theology so crucial to biblical eschatology—though judgment decimates the nation, God preserves a remnant through whom He fulfills His covenant promises. This remnant will be gathered 'out of all countries whither I have driven them.'

Note the theology here: God takes responsibility for the exile ('whither I have driven them'), yet He used the unfaithful shepherds and Babylon as His instruments. This demonstrates divine sovereignty—God accomplishes His purposes even through secondary causes. He did not approve of the shepherds' sin, yet He incorporated their rebellion into His redemptive plan. The exile was simultaneously God's judgment and the unfaithful shepherds' sin.

The promise that the remnant will 'be fruitful and increase' echoes God's creation blessing (Genesis 1:28) and covenant promise to Abraham (Genesis 17:6). Despite apparent destruction, God's redemptive purposes continue. This remnant theology finds fulfillment in multiple ways: the return from Babylonian exile, the preservation of a Jewish remnant through whom Messiah came (Romans 9:27), and ultimately the church as the people of God gathered from every nation (Romans 11:5).

## Historical Context

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Historically, this prophecy was fulfilled when Cyrus allowed Jews to return to Judah (538 BC) and rebuild the temple. Yet only a remnant returned—most Jews remained scattered throughout the Persian Empire and later the Roman world. Jesus began gathering the true remnant of Israel, and after Pentecost the gospel spread to Gentiles, fulfilling God's promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through his seed (Galatians 3:8).

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

## Study Questions

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1. How does the remnant theology comfort believers when the visible church appears weak or compromised?
2. What does it mean that God both judges His people and preserves a remnant for Himself?
3. In what ways does the gathering of the remnant from all countries point forward to the church as a multi-ethnic people of God?

## Interlinear Text

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וְאֲנִי י' H589	אֶקְבֹּץ H6908	אֶת H853	שְׁאֵר יֵת H7611	צֹאֲנֵי י' H6629	מִכָּל H3605
	And I will gather		the remnant	of my flock	
הָאֲרָצוֹת H776	אֲשֶׁר H834	הֵיךְ הִתִּי H5080	אֶת H853	שָׁמָּה H8033	
	out of all countries	whither I have driven			
וְהִשְׁבֹּתִי י' H7725		אֶתְּךָ י' H853	עַל H5921	בְּנֵי H5116	
	them and will bring them again			to their folds	
וְכָר ו' H6509		וְרָבָּו: H7235			
	and they shall be fruitful	and increase			

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 32:37** (Parallel theme): Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely:

**Jeremiah 29:14** (Parallel theme): And I will be found of you, saith the LORD: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the LORD; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.

**Jeremiah 30:3** (Parallel theme): For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah, saith the LORD: and I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.

**Ezekiel 11:17** (Parallel theme): Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel.

**Jeremiah 31:8** (Parallel theme): Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a great company shall return thither.

**Psalms 106:47** (Parallel theme): Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, and to triumph in thy praise.

**Ezekiel 36:24** (Parallel theme): For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.

**Ezekiel 36:37** (Parallel theme): Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock.

**Micah 7:12** (Parallel theme): In that day also he shall come even to thee from Assyria, and from the fortified cities, and from the fortress even to the river, and from sea to sea, and from mountain to mountain.