

# Jeremiah 25:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.

## Analysis

**Howl, ye shepherds, and cry; and wallow yourselves in the ashes, ye principal of the flock: for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished; and ye shall fall like a pleasant vessel.** The term *rō'im* (רעים, shepherds) refers to political and religious leaders who guided the people. The phrase *wēhitpallēšû* (והתפלשו, wallow yourselves) describes extreme grief—rolling in ashes and dust as mourning ritual. The *'abbîrê haššō'n* (אבירי הצאן, principal/mighty ones of the flock) are the powerful elite—kings, nobles, priests.

The phrase *kî-mālē'û yēmêkem liṭbôah ûtēpûšôtêkem* (כִּי־מָלְאוּ יְמֵיכֶם לטֹבוֹחַ וְתַפְּשׁוּתֵיכֶם, for the days of your slaughter and of your dispersions are accomplished) announces that the appointed time has arrived. The image *ûnēpātem kiḵlî ḥemdâ* (וְנִפְּלֵתֶם כְּכֵלֵי חֶמְדָּה, you shall fall like a pleasant vessel) compares leaders to valuable pottery shattered beyond repair. The irony is striking—those who should have shepherded God's flock faithfully instead led them to destruction and now face judgment themselves. Jesus condemned the Pharisees as blind guides (Matthew 23:16-24), and James warned that teachers face stricter judgment (James 3:1).

## Historical Context

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Judah's leaders—King Jehoiakim, his princes, the priests, false prophets—consistently led the people into sin and rejected God's warnings through Jeremiah. When Jerusalem fell, these leaders suffered specially severe judgment. King Zedekiah witnessed his sons' execution before having his eyes gouged out (2 Kings 25:7). Nobles were executed at Riblah (2 Kings 25:18-21). The leadership class was decimated, fulfilling this prophecy. Their failure to shepherd God's flock faithfully brought catastrophe upon themselves and those they led.

## Related Passages

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

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

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does the severe judgment on 'shepherds' (leaders) demonstrate the greater accountability of those who guide and teach God's people?
2. What does the image of leaders 'falling like a pleasant vessel' (shattered beyond repair) teach about the consequences of failed spiritual leadership?
3. In what ways might spiritual leaders today fail to shepherd God's people faithfully, and what accountability do they face?

## Interlinear Text

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הִיל ילו	הֶרְעוּ ים	וְזָעַקוּ ו	וְהִתְפַּלְשׁוּ	אֲדִיר י
Howl	ye shepherds	and cry	and wallow	yourselves in the ashes ye principal
H3213	H7462	H2199	H6428	H117
הַצֹּאֵן	כִּי	מְלָא ו	יָמֶיךָ	לְטֹב וְחַ
of the flock	H3588	are accomplished	for the days	of your slaughter
H6629		H4390	H3117	H2873
וּתְפוּצוֹ וְתִיָּךְ	וְנִפְלְתָּ	כֵּל י	חֲמֻדָּה:	
and of your dispersions	and ye shall fall	vessel	like a pleasant	
H8600	H5307	H3627	H2532	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Jeremiah 6:26** (Parallel theme): O daughter of my people, gird thee with sackcloth, and wallow thyself in ashes: make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation: for the spoiler shall suddenly come upon us.

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