

Jeremiah 31:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Analysis

God commands the nations to hear and declare His word—specifically, that 'He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.' This is a missionary charge: the nations must proclaim what God is doing for Israel. The 'isles afar off' represent the remote regions of the earth, showing that God's restoration of Israel has universal significance. The nations must witness and testify to God's covenant faithfulness.

The promise itself is covenantal: God who scattered will gather; God who judged will restore. The shepherd imagery recalls Psalm 23 and anticipates Jesus' self-identification as the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). Unlike the bad shepherds condemned in 23:1-2, God is the true Shepherd who protects, provides, and preserves His flock. The phrase 'keep him' (shamar, שָׁמַר) means guard, watch over, protect—conveying security and tender care.

The theological significance is that God's dealings with Israel demonstrate His character to all nations. Israel's restoration proves God's faithfulness, justice, and mercy. This prepares the way for the gospel's universal proclamation—if God keeps covenant with Israel despite their unfaithfulness, He will certainly keep covenant with all who trust in Christ. The nations must 'hear' and 'declare' this good news, anticipating the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

Historical Context

When exiles returned and rebuilt Jerusalem, it testified to surrounding nations of God's power and faithfulness. When Jesus came as Israel's Messiah and the gospel spread to Gentiles, the nations began declaring God's faithfulness in gathering His scattered people. The church's international, multi-ethnic composition continues to declare this message—God keeps His promises and gathers a people for Himself from every tribe and tongue.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. Why must the nations hear and declare God's work of gathering Israel—what does this teach them about God's character?
2. How does God's role as the true Shepherd of His people contrast with false shepherds (political and religious leaders) who scatter the flock?
3. In what ways does Israel's restoration point forward to and prepare for the gospel's proclamation to all nations?

Interlinear Text

בָּאֵי יְמִים וּבְגִיאָה שְׁמַע ۱
דְּבָר יְהוָה אֶל־עֵמֶקְנָה
Hear the word of the LORD O ye nations and declare it in the isles

H8085 H1697 H3068 H1471 H5046 H339

וְשִׁמְרֵר וְיִקְבֹּא כֵּן יִשְׁבָּאֵל
מִן־אָמֶר וְמִמְּרַתְּלָה
afar off and say He that scattered Israel will gather him and keep

H4801 H559 H2219 H3478 H6908 H8104

כָּרְבָּעַ הַדְּרָבָן
him as a shepherd doth his flock

H7462 H5739

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 40:11 (Parallel theme): He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

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.

Isaiah 66:19 (Parallel theme): And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal, and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

Deuteronomy 30:4 (References Lord): If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the LORD thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:

John 11:52 (Parallel theme): And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

John 10:27 (Parallel theme): My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

Zephaniah 3:19 (Parallel theme): Behold, at that time I will undo all that afflict thee: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame.

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