

Jeremiah 31:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. This verse promises comprehensive restoration that reverses the exile. **I will bring them from the north country** specifically addresses Babylon (consistently called 'north' in Jeremiah though geographically northeast, since invaders approached via the northern route). **Gather them from the coasts of the earth** uses qavats (קָבַץ), meaning to assemble or collect what has been scattered—the same word used of regathering after worldwide dispersion (Deuteronomy 30:3-4).

Remarkably, the regathered include **the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her that travaileth**—precisely those least able to make the arduous journey from Babylon. This demonstrates that restoration is divine work, not human achievement. In ancient warfare, the weak were often left behind or perished; God promises none will be excluded from His regathering. This merciful inclusion echoes Isaiah 35:5-6 where blind eyes and lame legs are healed in the messianic age.

A great company shall return thither (קָהָל גָּדוֹל, qahal gadol) envisions massive restoration exceeding the actual historical return under Zerubbabel (c. 50,000 per

Ezra 2:64). This points beyond the post-exilic return to the great ingathering of Jew and Gentile in Messiah's kingdom (Isaiah 11:10-12, Matthew 8:11, Revelation 7:9).

Historical Context

The return from Babylon (538 BC onward) fulfilled this partially—exiles did return to rebuild. Yet numbers were modest, and the prophecy's full scope (worldwide regathering, comprehensive inclusion of the weak) remained unfulfilled. Second Temple Judaism recognized this tension, developing hope for a future, greater regathering. Jesus' ministry deliberately included the blind, lame, and outcast (Luke 14:13, 21), signaling the messianic restoration's arrival. The church's mission to 'the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8) continues this ingathering until Christ returns.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does God's promise to include 'the blind and the lame' in restoration challenge human tendency to value strength and ability?
2. What does it mean that restoration is God's work ('I will bring them') rather than human achievement?
3. In what ways does the church's inclusion of weak, marginalized, and unlikely members reflect this prophecy's fulfillment?

Interlinear Text

הַבְּנִי	מִבְּ יָא	אָזְתָּה	אֶרֶץ	אֵגֶל	וְאֶקְבָּצָתִים
H2005	Behold I will bring	H853	country	them from the north	and gather
	H935		H776	H6828	H6908

מִרְכָּתִי בְּ אֶצְבָּעָה עִוּר וְלִפְנֵי
them from the coasts country and with them the blind and the lame
H3411 H776 H5787 H6455

בָּקָר וְקָרְבָּן יְלִיל דָת יְחִידָה וְקָרְבָּן גָּד וְקָרְבָּן
the woman with child and her that travaileth with child together company a great

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 34:16 (Parallel theme): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Isaiah 42:16 (Parallel theme): And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

Jeremiah 23:8 (Parallel theme): But, The LORD liveth, which brought up and which led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all countries whither I had driven them; and they shall dwell in their own land.

Micah 4:6 (Parallel theme): In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted;

Hebrews 12:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

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 34:13 (Parallel theme): And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

Isaiah 43:6 (Parallel theme): I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth;

Isaiah 52:10 (Parallel theme): The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

Jeremiah 3:18 (Parallel theme): In those days the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.