

# Jeremiah 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her; they shall pitch their tents against her round about; they shall feed every one in his place.

## Analysis

**The shepherds with their flocks shall come unto her**—the image of ro'im (רֹאִים, shepherds) here refers to enemy military commanders who will lead their armies (edrehim, אֲדָרִים, flocks) against Jerusalem. **They shall pitch their tents against her round about** depicts the siege tactics where armies surrounded the city completely, cutting off escape and supply. **They shall feed every one in his place** uses ra'ah (רָאָה, to feed/graze), continuing the pastoral metaphor but meaning the invading forces will systematically plunder and consume Jerusalem's resources sector by sector.

This vivid metaphor transforms the comforting image of shepherds into an instrument of judgment. Where God is the true Shepherd who feeds His flock (Psalm 23), these 'shepherds' come to devour. The organized, methodical nature of the attack ('every one in his place') reveals that this is not random chaos but divine judgment executed through pagan armies. This anticipates the Babylonian siege of 588-586 BC, where Nebuchadnezzar's commanders systematically dismantled Jerusalem's defenses. Jesus later wept over Jerusalem using similar language of encirclement (Luke 19:43-44), showing that rejection of God's word brings inevitable judgment.

## Historical Context

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Jeremiah 6 dates to the early reign of Josiah or Jehoiakim (circa 626-605 BC), warning of invasion from the north. The 'shepherds' metaphor would resonate with agricultural Judah, where shepherding was the primary economy. Military commanders were commonly called 'shepherds' in ancient Near Eastern texts. The siege tactics described—surrounding the city, pitching tents, systematic plundering—match Babylonian military practice documented in Assyrian and Babylonian annals. The fulfillment came when Nebuchadnezzar's officers surrounded Jerusalem completely, with each commander assigned a sector to attack (2 Kings 25:1-4). Archaeological evidence from the Lachish Letters confirms the systematic nature of Babylon's conquest of Judean cities before Jerusalem's fall.

## Related Passages

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**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

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1. How does the transformation of the 'shepherd' image from comfort to judgment illustrate the principle that God's blessings become curses when His people rebel?
2. What does the organized, methodical nature of this judgment teach about God's sovereignty over pagan nations?

## Interlinear Text

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תָּקַע וְיַבְּרִכָּה מִצְרָיִם  
unto her they shall pitch  
with their flocks  
the shepherds  
and the flocks  
shall come

H413 H935 H7462 H5739 H8628

אֶת וְיַבְּרִכָּה מִצְרָיִם  
every one  
the shepherds  
against her round about  
their tents  
and the flocks  
the flocks

H853 H376 H7462 H5439 H168 H5921

בָּרוּךְ  
in his place  
H3027

## Additional Cross-References

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**Luke 19:43** (Parallel theme): For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

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