

Recovery Foretold

Key Verse: *“In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the vale, and in the cities of the south, and in the land of Benjamin, and in the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, shall the flocks pass again under the hands of him that telleth them, saith the Lord.”*
—**Jeremiah 33:13**

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 33:1-13

heart. He gently leads
Isa. 40:11, *NIRV*

Israel's problems often grew from self-centered shepherds appointed by God: “As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, you abandoned my flock and left them to be attacked by every wild animal. And though you were my shepherds, you didn't search for my sheep when they were lost. You took care of yourselves and left the sheep to starve.”—Ezek. 34:8, *New Living Translation*

Today's Key Verse refers to Jehovah's relationship with the nation of Israel, his chosen people. Israel had vowed to remain obedient under a covenant of laws and ordinances in exchange for divine care and blessing. They were cared for by God as a shepherd tends his flock. David wrote, “The LORD is my shepherd. He gives me everything I need.” (Ps. 23:1, *New International Reader's Version*) The Prophet Isaiah proclaims this same relationship between the Creator and his chosen people: “He takes care of his flock like a shepherd. He gathers the lambs in his arms. He carries them close to his heart. He gently leads those that have little ones.”—

Not all of Israel's shepherds, however, ignored instructions from Jehovah. Many prophets were faithful in telling the people that God would one day send a shepherd who would reestablish Israel's place once again among all the nations. "Then I will appoint over them one shepherd and he will feed them, a ruler like My servant David; he will feed them and be their shepherd."—Ezek. 34:23, *Amplified Bible*

Faithful Israelites who were paying attention to God's messengers knew David prefigured the coming Messiah. Mary, Jesus' mother, quickly understood when an angel appeared before her with news she would be giving birth to a special child: "You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David."—Luke 1:31,32, *New International Version*

The word "telleteth" in our Key Verse means to number. Jeremiah's message is that Israel, though they have sinned greatly, will once again be counted as the sheep of Jehovah. Paul states the Gospel is "to the Jew first, and also to the Greek [Gentile]." (Rom. 1:16) This verse, along with others such as Acts 13:46 and Romans 11:25,26, highlight the fact that God's plan for salvation involves a priority for the Jewish people, as they were the first recipients of the divine promises and covenant. However, they were not Jesus' sheep which he spoke of in John chapter 10.

In answering their question as to whether he was the Messiah, Jesus said, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand."—John 10:24-29, *NIV* ■