

Scattered, Yet Not Forsaken

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The God Who Gathers His People

Main Text

Psalm 44:11

Isaiah 11:11–12

Jeremiah 31:8–10

Ezekiel 36:24

Zechariah 10:9–10

Sermon Theme

Israel and Judah were scattered among the nations because of sin, rebellion, and covenant unfaithfulness. Their scattering brought grief, shame, reproach, and longing. Yet the same God who scattered in righteousness promised to gather in mercy. The story of scattered Israel is not only a story of judgment; it is also a story of remembrance, restoration, and the faithfulness of the Lord.

Introduction

One of the great themes that runs through the Old Testament is the scattering and gathering of God's people.

Israel was brought out of Egypt by the mighty hand of God. The Lord gave them His law. He brought them into the land. He gave them kings, prophets, priests, sacrifices, songs, and promises. He placed His name among them. He gave them a land of inheritance.

But Israel and Judah rebelled.

They followed idols.

They rejected prophets.

They shed innocent blood.

They trusted foreign powers.

They polluted worship.

They forgot the Lord who brought them out of Egypt.

So the Lord did what He had warned He would do. He scattered them among the nations.

Psalm 44:11 says:

Psalm 44:11

“Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.”

That is a sorrowful confession.

They were scattered among the heathen. They were no longer settled in the land. They were exiled, dispersed, reproached, and carried into strange places.

But scattering was not the final word.

Isaiah 11:12 says:

Isaiah 11:12

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

The God who scattered also promised to gather.

This sermon follows that movement: the grief of scattering, the reason for scattering, the cry from exile, and the hope of gathering.

1. Scattering Was a Real Judgment From God

Psalm 44:11 says:

Psalm 44:11

“Thou hast given us like sheep appointed for meat; and hast scattered us among the heathen.”

The psalmist does not pretend the scattering was light. He says the people were like sheep appointed for meat. That means they were helpless, exposed, and vulnerable. They were not speaking from comfort. They were speaking from national grief.

Psalm 60:1–3 says:

Psalm 60:1

“O God, thou hast cast us off, thou hast scattered us, thou hast been displeased; O turn thyself to us again.”

Psalm 60:2

“Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof; for it shaketh.”

Psalm 60:3

“Thou hast shewed thy people hard things: thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment.”

This is the language of a people shaken by God’s displeasure.

“O God, thou hast cast us off.”

“Thou hast scattered us.”

“Thou hast been displeased.”

“Thou hast shewed thy people hard things.”

The scattering of Israel and Judah was not merely the result of bad politics or stronger armies. Assyria and Babylon were real powers, but Scripture teaches us to look deeper. God's people were scattered because the Lord was displeased with sin.

Jeremiah 9:16 says:

Jeremiah 9:16

"I will scatter them also among the heathen, whom neither they nor their fathers have known: and I will send a sword after them, till I have consumed them."

Ezekiel 22:15 says:

Ezekiel 22:15

"And I will scatter thee among the heathen, and disperse thee in the countries, and will consume thy filthiness out of thee."

This is serious language. God says, "I will scatter." He says, "I will disperse." He says He will consume their filthiness.

Scattering was not random. It was discipline. It was judgment. It was the consequence of long rebellion.

God's people must never take sin lightly. Sin scatters. Sin divides. Sin removes peace. Sin can take a person, a family, a church, or a nation away from the place of blessing.

Israel's scattering teaches us that the Lord is merciful, but He is not mocked.

2. The Sanctuary Was Destroyed and the People Were Reproached

Psalm 74:1 says:

Psalm 74:1

"O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever? why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?"

Psalm 74:3 says:

Psalm 74:3

"Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations; even all that the enemy hath done wickedly in the sanctuary."

Psalm 74:7 says:

Psalm 74:7

"They have cast fire into thy sanctuary, they have defiled by casting down the dwelling place of thy name to the ground."

The scattering of God's people was connected to the destruction of holy places. The sanctuary was burned. The dwelling place of God's name was cast down. The place of worship became a place of desolation.

This was not only military loss. It was spiritual devastation.

Psalm 79:1 says:

Psalm 79:1

"O God, the heathen are come into thine inheritance; thy holy temple have they defiled; they have laid Jerusalem on heaps."

Psalm 79:4 says:

Psalm 79:4

"We are become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us."

Jerusalem was ruined, and God's people became a reproach. The nations mocked. The enemies scorned. The people who were called by the name of the Lord were now humiliated among their neighbors.

This is part of the bitterness of scattering. It is not only loss of land. It is loss of honor. It is shame before enemies. It is the pain of hearing unbelieving nations mock the people who once sang the songs of Zion.

Psalm 89:38–45 also mourns the casting down of the crown and kingdom.

Psalm 89:39

"Thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground."

Psalm 89:44

"Thou hast made his glory to cease, and cast his throne down to the ground."

The crown was cast down. The throne was humbled. The kingdom was broken.

The people had trusted in visible things: the city, the temple, the throne, the crown, the land. But when they turned from God, those visible things could not save them.

A temple cannot protect a people who reject the God of the temple.

A throne cannot preserve a nation that refuses the King of heaven.

A crown cannot secure a ruler who will not bow before the Lord.

A land cannot bless a people who despise the covenant.

Judah and Israel learned this through tears.

3. The Scattered People Mourned in a Strange Land

Psalm 137:1 says:

Psalm 137:1

“By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.”

This is one of the most famous pictures of exile in Scripture.

They were by the rivers of Babylon, but their hearts remembered Zion. They were alive, but they were grieving. They were far from the land, far from the temple, far from the familiar songs of worship.

Psalm 137:2 says:

Psalm 137:2

“We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.”

The harps were silent.

The instruments once used for joy were hanging unused. The songs of Zion did not come easily in the land of captivity.

Psalm 137:3–4 says:

Psalm 137:3

“For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.”

Psalm 137:4

“How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land?”

This is the sorrow of exile. The captors asked for songs. But the people were too wounded to sing as entertainment for those who had wasted them.

“How shall we sing the LORD’S song in a strange land?”

That question carries deep pain.

The scattered people had memory. They remembered Zion. They remembered Jerusalem. They remembered worship. They remembered what had been lost.

Memory can hurt, but it can also keep hope alive. If they had forgotten Zion completely, they would have simply become Babylonian. But they remembered.

Psalm 137:5–6 says:

Psalm 137:5

“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.”

Psalm 137:6

“If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth...”

The exiles refused to let captivity erase their holy memory.

This is important. God's people may be scattered, but they must not forget who they are. They may be far from home, but they must not forget the Lord. They may be in Babylon, but they must not become Babylon in heart.

The harps were silent for a season, but memory remained.

4. Scattering Was Because of Sin and Iniquity

The Bible does not allow us to treat Israel's scattering as meaningless suffering. It gives the reason.

Ezekiel 39:23 says:

Ezekiel 39:23

"And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me..."

Daniel 9:7 says:

Daniel 9:7

"O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces... because of their trespass that they have trespassed against thee."

Ezekiel 36:19 says:

Ezekiel 36:19

"And I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them."

That verse is plain. God judged them according to their way and according to their doings.

They were not innocent victims of a powerless God. They were covenant people under discipline because they had sinned.

Psalm 106:27 says:

Psalm 106:27

"To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands."

This was part of the judgment connected to rebellion.

Ezekiel 20:23 says:

Ezekiel 20:23

"I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and disperse them through the countries."

God had warned them long before the scattering happened. He had told them what disobedience would bring.

Zechariah 7:14 says:

Zechariah 7:14

“But I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not.”

Why? Because they refused to hear.

Zechariah 7:11–12 says:

Zechariah 7:11

“But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.”

Zechariah 7:12

“Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone...”

This is the root: they refused to hear. They made their hearts hard.

Scattering begins in the heart before it appears on the map. Long before Israel was scattered among nations, their hearts were scattered from obedience. Their affections wandered after idols. Their ears turned from prophets. Their trust shifted from God to men.

Then outward scattering followed inward rebellion.

5. God’s People Became Like Scattered Sheep

Jeremiah 50:17 says:

Jeremiah 50:17

“Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones.”

This verse gathers the history together.

Assyria devoured the Northern Kingdom. Babylon broke Judah. Israel became a scattered sheep.

That image is tender and tragic.

A sheep is not strong like a lion. A sheep needs a shepherd. A scattered sheep is exposed, vulnerable, hunted, and helpless.

Jeremiah says the lions drove Israel away. Assyria and Babylon acted like devouring powers. Yet behind that history was God’s discipline.

This verse also shows that scattering came in stages. First Assyria. Then Babylon. The Northern Kingdom fell. Then Judah fell. The people of God were broken and dispersed.

But the image of sheep also prepares us for hope.

Ezekiel 34:12 says:

Ezekiel 34:12

“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...”

God does not leave His sheep scattered forever.

Ezekiel 34:13 says:

Ezekiel 34:13

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries...”

The scattered sheep still have a Shepherd.

This is the mercy of God. Even when scattering came because of sin, God did not forget His sheep. He promised to seek them, gather them, and bring them back.

A scattered sheep cannot save itself. It must be found.

The Lord says, “So will I seek out my sheep.”

6. God Promised to Gather the Outcasts of Israel and Judah

Isaiah 11:11 says:

Isaiah 11:11

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people...”

Isaiah 11:12 says:

Isaiah 11:12

“And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

This is one of the great promises of gathering.

God would recover the remnant. He would assemble the outcasts. He would gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Notice the words: recover, assemble, gather.

God knows where the outcasts are. He knows where the dispersed are. He knows where the remnant is hidden. No nation can hide them from Him. No distance can defeat His promise.

Isaiah 43:5–6 says:

Isaiah 43:5

“Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west.”

Isaiah 43:6

“I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back...”

East, west, north, and south must yield to God’s command.

If God says, “Give up,” the north must give up. If God says, “Keep not back,” the south cannot keep back. The nations may scatter, but God commands gathering.

Isaiah 49:12 says:

Isaiah 49:12

“Behold, these shall come from far: and, lo, these from the north and from the west...”

God’s people would return from far places.

Isaiah 56:8 says:

Isaiah 56:8

“The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts of Israel saith, Yet will I gather others to him...”

The Lord identifies Himself as the God who gathereth the outcasts of Israel.

That is His name in action: the Gatherer of the outcasts.

7. God Promised to Bring Back the Captivity of Israel and Judah

Jeremiah 30:3 says:

Jeremiah 30:3

“For, lo, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel and Judah...”

Both Israel and Judah are named.

The Northern Kingdom had been scattered by Assyria. Judah had been carried away by Babylon. But God says He will bring again the captivity of His people Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah 30:10 says:

Jeremiah 30:10

“Therefore fear thou not, O my servant Jacob, saith the LORD; neither be dismayed, O Israel: for, lo, I will save thee from afar...”

This is a beautiful phrase: “I will save thee from afar.”

Distance does not weaken God's arm. Exile does not limit His mercy. Captivity does not silence His promise.

Jeremiah 30:11 says:

Jeremiah 30:11

"For I am with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee..."

God's presence reaches into exile.

Jeremiah 31:8 says:

Jeremiah 31:8

"Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the coasts of the earth..."

Jeremiah 31:10 says:

Jeremiah 31:10

"Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations... He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."

This verse is the heart of the whole sermon.

"He that scattered Israel will gather him."

The same God who scattered in righteousness will gather in mercy. The same God who judged will restore. The same God who disciplined will shepherd.

And He will keep them "as a shepherd doth his flock."

The nations are commanded to hear this. God wants the world to know: Israel's scattering was not the end. The Shepherd will gather His flock.

8. God Would Gather From Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and All Lands

Isaiah 27:12–13 says:

Isaiah 27:13

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt..."

Assyria and Egypt are mentioned. Those ready to perish and those outcast would come and worship the Lord.

Jeremiah 16:13 says:

Jeremiah 16:13

"Therefore will I cast you out of this land into a land that ye know not..."

But Jeremiah 16:15 gives the promise:

Jeremiah 16:15

“But, The LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north, and from all the lands whither he had driven them...”

God says a future deliverance would be so great that people would speak of the Lord bringing Israel from the north country and from all lands.

Jeremiah 23:7–8 says the same:

Jeremiah 23:8

“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...”

This does not erase the Exodus from Egypt, but it shows the greatness of God’s future gathering. The God who brought them out once can bring them back again.

Jeremiah 46:27 says:

Jeremiah 46:27

“Fear not thou, O my servant Jacob... for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity...”

Jeremiah 46:28 says:

Jeremiah 46:28

“Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the LORD: for I am with thee...”

Again and again, the Lord says, “Fear not.” Why? Because He is with them. Scattered people need to know that God has not lost them.

Jeremiah 50:4 says:

Jeremiah 50:4

“In those days, and in that time, saith the LORD, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together...”

Jeremiah 50:5 says:

Jeremiah 50:5

“They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward...”

What a reversal.

Earlier, fear sent some toward Egypt. Here repentance sends them toward Zion. They ask the way home. Their faces are turned in the right direction.

Jeremiah 50:8 says:

Jeremiah 50:8

“Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans...”

The call is clear: leave Babylon. Seek the Lord. Return toward Zion.

9. God Would Gather His People for His Name’s Sake

Ezekiel 20:34 says:

Ezekiel 20:34

“And I will bring you out from the people, and will gather you out of the countries wherein ye are scattered...”

Ezekiel 20:41 says:

Ezekiel 20:41

“I will accept you with your sweet savour, when I bring you out from the people, and gather you out of the countries wherein ye have been scattered...”

Ezekiel 28:25 says:

Ezekiel 28:25

“Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered...”

Ezekiel 36:24 says:

Ezekiel 36:24

“For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.”

Again we hear the Lord saying, “I will.”

“I will bring.”

“I will gather.”

“I will take.”

“I will bring you into your own land.”

The hope of scattered Israel rests on God’s will, not man’s strength.

Ezekiel 37:21 says:

Ezekiel 37:21

“Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side...”

God promises gathering from every side.

Ezekiel 39:27–28 says:

Ezekiel 39:27

“When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands...”

Ezekiel 39:28

“Then shall they know that I am the LORD their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land...”

This gathering is meant to reveal God.

They would know He is the Lord. They would understand that captivity had been judgment, and gathering was mercy. They would see both His holiness and His faithfulness.

Ezekiel 39:28 also says:

Ezekiel 39:28

“...and have left none of them any more there.”

The God who scatters knows how to gather completely according to His promise.

10. God Would Gather the Afflicted, Outcast, and Remnant

Micah 2:12 says:

Micah 2:12

“I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel...”

Micah 4:6 says:

Micah 4:6

“In that day, saith the LORD, will I assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out...”

Micah 4:7 says:

Micah 4:7

“And I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation...”

God gathers the weak, the limping, the driven out, and the cast far off.

This is beautiful.

God does not only gather the strong. He gathers those who halt. He gathers those who have been driven out. He gathers the afflicted and makes a remnant. He takes what was cast far off and restores strength.

Zephaniah 3:10 says:

Zephaniah 3:10

“From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.”

Even the dispersed will become worshipers. They will bring offerings to the Lord.

Zechariah 10:9 says:

Zechariah 10:9

“And I will sow them among the people: and they shall remember me in far countries...”

This verse shows mercy even in scattering. God says He will sow them among the people, and they shall remember Him in far countries.

They had forgotten Him in the land, but some would remember Him in far countries.

Zechariah 10:10 says:

Zechariah 10:10

“I will bring them again also out of the land of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria...”

The God who gathers is not limited by the place of exile.

Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, far countries, north, south, east, west — all are within reach of His hand.

11. The Nations That Scattered Israel Would Be Judged

Joel 3:2 says:

Joel 3:2

“I will also gather all nations... and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations...”

God does not ignore what the nations did to His people.

Yes, Israel and Judah were scattered because of sin. But the nations that acted with cruelty, greed, and pride would also answer to God.

Joel 3:6 says:

Joel 3:6

“The children also of Judah and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians...”

God saw the selling of Judah’s children. He saw the scattering. He saw the mistreatment. He saw the nations’ violence.

Obadiah 1:20 mentions the captivity of Israel and the captivity of Jerusalem. Amos 9:9 says:

Amos 9:9

“For, lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all nations...”

But Amos 9:14 gives hope:

Amos 9:14

“And I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel...”

God can judge His people for sin and still judge the nations for cruelty.

This is important. God’s discipline of His people does not give the wicked permission to be proud. Assyria and Babylon were instruments, but they were not innocent. The nations scattered, sold, mocked, and devoured. God saw it all.

The Judge of all the earth does right.

12. God’s People Must Flee Babylon and Return to the Lord

Zechariah 2:6–7 says:

Zechariah 2:6

“Ho, ho, come forth, and flee from the land of the north, saith the LORD...”

Zechariah 2:7

“Deliver thyself, O Zion, that dwellest with the daughter of Babylon.”

Jeremiah 50:8 says:

Jeremiah 50:8

“Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans...”

There comes a time when God calls His people to come out.

Do not settle in Babylon forever.

Do not make peace with exile as though it were your final home.

Do not forget Zion.

Do not forget the Lord.

Do not forget the covenant.

Do not forget the promise.

Jeremiah 50:4–5 says Israel and Judah will seek the Lord together and ask the way to Zion with their faces turned there.

That is repentance.

Repentance turns the face toward God. It asks the way home. It says, “I have dwelt long enough in a far country.” It says, “I belong to the Lord.” It says, “Babylon is not my final home.”

The scattered must respond to the gathering call.

God promises to gather, but His people must not cling to Babylon.

13. The Scattered People Are Called to Remember, Return, and Trust

Across these passages, the scattered people are called to remember.

Psalm 137 remembers Zion.

Zechariah 10:9 says they will remember the Lord in far countries.

Jeremiah 50 shows them asking the way to Zion.

Hosea 11:10–11 shows them returning trembling.

Hosea 11:10 says:

Hosea 11:10

“They shall walk after the LORD: he shall roar like a lion...”

Hosea 11:11 says:

Hosea 11:11

“They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria...”

They return trembling. That is the right posture. Not proud. Not careless. Not boasting. Trembling before the Lord.

Scattered people must remember what sin brought. They must remember what God promised. They must remember who they are. They must remember the Lord.

Then they must return.

Not merely geographically, but spiritually. The deepest return is not only from Babylon to Judah. It is from rebellion to obedience, from idols to the Lord, from pride to humility, from forgetfulness to worship.

God’s purpose in gathering is not simply to move bodies back to land. It is to restore a people to Himself.

14. The Great Comfort: “He That Scattered Israel Will Gather Him”

Jeremiah 31:10 says:

Jeremiah 31:10

“Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations... He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

This verse is the center of hope.

“He that scattered Israel will gather him.”

The same God is present in both actions.

He scattered in righteousness.

He gathers in mercy.

He disciplined in holiness.

He restores in covenant faithfulness.

He exposed sin.

He preserves a remnant.

He brings His sheep home.

And He does not only gather. He keeps.

“and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

The gathered people still need a Shepherd. Restoration is not merely returning to a place; it is being kept by the Lord.

This is the great hope: the Shepherd does not abandon the scattered sheep. He seeks them, gathers them, keeps them, and brings them into His care.

15. Lessons From Israel and Judah Scattered Among the Nations

First, sin scatters.

Israel and Judah were scattered because of rebellion, idolatry, and refusal to hear God’s word.

Second, God’s judgment is real.

The sanctuary was destroyed. The city was ruined. The crown was cast down. The people were carried away.

Third, exile brings grief.

By the rivers of Babylon, they sat down and wept.

Fourth, memory matters.

They refused to forget Jerusalem. In far countries, they remembered the Lord.

Fifth, God sees the nations.

He judges those who scatter, sell, mock, and devour His people.

Sixth, God promises gathering.

He will gather from east, west, north, south, Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, and all countries.

Seventh, God gathers the weak.

He gathers the outcast, the afflicted, the halted, the driven away, and the remnant.

Eighth, God's gathering reveals His name.

"They shall know that I am the LORD."

Ninth, God's people must respond.

They must flee Babylon, ask the way to Zion, seek the Lord, and return trembling.

Tenth, the Shepherd keeps His flock.

"He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."

Closing Exhortation

Israel was scattered.

The psalmist said:

Psalm 44:11

"Thou hast scattered us among the heathen."

Jerusalem was ruined.

The sanctuary was burned.

The people were reproached.

The crown was cast down.

The harps were hung on the willows.

The exiles wept by the rivers of Babylon.

Israel became a scattered sheep.

Assyria devoured.

Babylon broke the bones.

The nations mocked.

The people mourned.

But God was not finished.

Isaiah said He would gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. Jeremiah said the Lord would save Jacob from afar. Ezekiel said God would take them from among the heathen and gather them out of all countries. Micah said He would gather the remnant. Zechariah said they would remember Him in far countries. Jeremiah declared to the nations:

Jeremiah 31:10

"He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock."

That is the hope.

The scattering was real, but it was not final.

The exile was bitter, but it was not beyond mercy.

The nations were many, but they were not stronger than God.
The distance was great, but it was not too far for His hand.
The sheep were scattered, but the Shepherd knew where they were.

So let every heart hear the warning and the promise.

Do not wander from God.
Do not treat sin as small.
Do not wait until scattering comes to remember the Lord.
Do not make Babylon your home.
Do not forget Zion.
Do not forget the word of the Lord.
Do not forget the Shepherd.

And if you are far off, remember this: God gathers outcasts.

If you have been scattered by sin, return.
If you have been living in a far country, remember the Lord.
If your harp has been hanging on the willows, look again to the God who restores song.
If you are weak, halted, afflicted, or driven away, hear the promise of the Shepherd.

He gathers.
He restores.
He keeps.
He brings home.

The God who scattered Israel in righteousness promised to gather Israel in mercy.

And His word stands.

Closing Prayer

Lord God, You are holy, righteous, merciful, and faithful. You scattered Israel and Judah because of sin, yet You promised to gather Your outcasts and restore Your remnant. Teach us to fear Your word and not wander from You. Keep us from the sins that scatter, divide, and destroy. Help us to remember You even in far countries. Gather what has been broken. Restore what has been cast down. Bring back those who have wandered. Keep us as a shepherd keeps his flock. Let our hearts seek the way to Zion, and let our lives bring glory to Your name. Amen.