

Jeremiah 23:1-12: Shepherds will be raised for the remnants returning to Israel.
The remnant has appeared but also their shepherds, affirming the fulfillment of prophecy.

Summaries of relevant background information from related passages.

Many passages prophesy the emergence of the Jewish remnant but Jeremiah also predicts that shepherds will concomitantly emerge to care for them. This is first mentioned in **Jer. 3:14-15** when Jeremiah is rebuking the Jews for their widespread idolatries (**Jer. 3:2-3**). God in **Jer. 3:12-13** ardently calls for their return for He will be gracious to them and His specific actions in this regard are spelt out in **Jer.3:14-15**. God will take them selectively from different cities and families to return to Zion. It sounds like a drawn-out process, precisely the way the Jews return to Israel since 1948. Then comes the prediction of shepherds in **v15** who will be feeding them with knowledge and understanding, obviously through some kind of formal education or perhaps a disciple making process. After this, **Jer. 3:16-18** refers to a specific period stated as “in those days”. It must be a later period for by then the remnant has multiplied and increased. Christ will be on the throne, which is why the ark will not be remembered or missed. Hence, it must be in the Millennium when He will rule. Judah and Israel will be reunited and they will come together en masse into the land. This is in the future as all believing Jews with the resurrected OT saints (**Eze. 37:12**) will enter the land at His second advent to start the Millennium. In fact it affirms that the selective return in **v14** is before His second advent and is now in process. The next relevant passage is **Jer. 16:14-15** which again predicts the Jews returning from many countries after His firm rebuke that they will be hurled out of their homeland (**Jer. 16:13**). But this return will be greater than the Exodus from Egypt (v14) and so it cannot be the return of the Babylon Exile for Jerusalem is again destroyed and exiled in 70 AD. They are again returning to Israel now, but is this the one predicted in v15? (See below)

Explaining the Passage – Jeremiah 23:1-12

The context is in Jer. 21-23, **three chapters** in which Jeremiah rebuke their leaders. In Jer. 21-22 the rebuke is for their evil kings and chapter 23 it is their religious leaders, namely the prophets and priests (**Jer. 23:11-12**). Amazingly in **Jer. 23:1-2**, he charges them as bad shepherds responsible for the scattering of the Jews. Thus in **Jer. 23:3**, He will gather them from all the countries back to Israel and again this is certainly the present return for it is similar to **Jer. 16:15**. Also the next key event after their return is the rule of the “righteous Branch” in **Jer. 23:5-6**, who is obviously Christ. The Jews will be saved and in Hebrew it is “yasha” meaning salvation, to dwell under Him in security, a clear reference to the Millennium. So in contrast, **Jer. 23:4** predicts the provision of good shepherds to care for the remnant. It is not just in knowledge and understanding (**Jer. 3:15**) but more, for it is to make them unafraid. Thus it is caring for their entire spiritual state, such that none will be missing. There is also ample hint on spiritual growth for in v3, they are to multiply and be fruitful. It harmonizes so well with the present leadership of the Messianic Jews who see themselves as spiritual shepherds (not prophets or priests) striving to make disciples among the remnant. In **Jer. 23:7-8**, it repeats **Jer. 16:15** that it will eventually be greater than the Exodus confirming that it is the same return. But how can it be greater than the Exodus? Well if these remnants are the ones entering into the Tribulation and then have that dramatic victory over the antichrist, indeed it will be.