**JEREMIAH**

**The Lonely, Troubled Prophet**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

The main storyline of the Bible is God’s redemption of His creation. Much of God’s work in the world happened through agents of change that He raised up to act on His behalf. Some of these individuals are known as “prophets.” Prophets are specially called and empowered individuals who are given clear assignments by God Himself. Usually, the instructions specifically delineate where and to whom they should go, and what they are to say and do. Their words and actions are designed to clearly communicate The Lord’s thoughts, intentions and instructions. This communication is known as a “prophesy.”

Some prophesies ‘foretell’ things that will happen in the future, while others ‘forthtell,’ or ‘speak-forth’ God’s words into a particular situation. Some prophesies bring messages of encouragement and hope, while others contain harsh warnings and unwanted instructions to people who don’t want to hear it.

**What you need to KNOW:**

Jeremiah is the second of the five books of “The Major Prophets” – the others are Isaiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The book of Jeremiah describes the difficult prophetic assignment that God gave Jeremiah when he was 20 years old.

Jeremiah’s base of operation was Jerusalem and his mission was arduous. For 42 years he stood alone among the people of Judea speaking forth prophesies that implored the people to change their wrongheaded thinking, attitudes and actions. He also foretold the doom and destruction that would come upon the people if they failed to correct their course. Jeremiah’s prophesies are also interspersed with descriptions of the blessings and benefits that would accompany their repentance. But the people showed continued resistance and acted like stubborn mules who could not be prodded into right actions by either a ‘carrot’ or a ‘stick.’ Jeremiah’s God-given task lasted for 42 years, during which he saw no hint of a change in the people and received nothing but scorn from those he was trying to save.

The account of Jeremiah’s life is emotionally raw, honestly relaying the loneliness, pain, danger and other personal costs associated with faithfully being ‘God’s agent’ in the midst of a crowd that hates you for it. He was also mocked, beaten and imprisoned for his unpopular point-of-view and messaging. The longsuffering ministry of Jeremiah demonstrates God’s patient mercy in His attempt to coax people to turn around and avoid certain destruction. However, in the end, the people of Judah refused and God, justly, allowed the Babylonian military to conquer and enslave the southern kingdom of Judah.

**GET GOING!**

**Jeremiah is a long book, as such, you might opt to take a hop, skip and a jump instead of reading the whole thing. If you decide to skim the book, be sure to drill into Chapters 1-2, 7-9, 16, 18, 20, 25, 30-31, 37-39, 42-43, 50-51.**