

# PREPARES

## JEREMIAH 1:1-19

(Prepared by Gene Thompson using LifeWay's ETB materials.)

1. Have there been any storms in your life in the past few years?
2. Are you in a storm right now?
3. Do you expect to have some storms in the next few months?

It seems like we are just coming out of a storm, during a storm or going into a storm. There is no escaping reality.

Jeremiah described his lifetime as being a turbulent time. Judah was surrounded by Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria, who were battling for world supremacy.

4. What has occurred in the last few weeks or months that can make us feel insecure? (Random shootings in schools, and public places, neighborhood violence, physical abuse, etc.)

### Read Jeremiah 1:1-3

Jeremiah was the son of a priest, lived in Anathoth and his ministry covered some 40 years—during the reign of three kings of Judah, Josiah, Jehoiakim and Zedekiah then the people were carried off to Babylon in exile. Though Jeremiah's ministry begins during the height of revival, he will also see and experience the depths of Judah's apostasy and its awful consequences.

We are going to focus on Jeremiah's call today. We will see how God prepared Jeremiah for the big job of being a prophet and then sent him out to accomplish the task. As we move through this study, let's watch for how God was working in Jeremiah's life and among His people.

### CREATED! Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

1. What specific things did God call Jeremiah to do? (A prophet to the nations; Do not say I am only a youth; You will go to everyone I send you; Speak whatever I tell you; Do not be afraid of anyone; take my message to the nations.)
2. What excuses did Jeremiah give? (I don't know how to speak; I am only a youth.)
3. When did God choose Jeremiah as His prophet? (Verse 5.)
4. Who is chosen today to carry God's message? (All believers.)
5. According to God's declaration to Jeremiah, why are those excuses irrelevant? (We are to go in God's strength not our own. He will give us the words to say when the time comes.)

God often calls us to accomplish tasks that are beyond our abilities so we will have to depend on Him. God never sets us up for failure when we obey His plan.

6. According to verse 10 what would be Jeremiah's message? ("To uproot and tear down, to destroy and demolish, to build and plant.")
7. What does the message "build and plant" convey to the people? (There is hope during destruction. God always has a message of restoration for those who repent.)

God promised to direct Jeremiah where he should go; God promised Jeremiah, He would instruct him in what to say; and the Lord promised Jeremiah His presence and protection. Jeremiah had no reason to fear—neither did we!

8. What do you believe God is calling you to do for Him?
9. How does Jeremiah's experience give you hope and encouragement?
10. How does God's presence override any deficiencies we might have? (In His strength all things are possible.)

When Jeremiah focused on his youth and inexperience, God promised His presence and His help.

### WATCHED! Read Jeremiah 1:11-16

1. In what ways did God prepare Jeremiah to serve Him? (He gave him two visions to let Jeremiah know what God was doing.)
2. What was the first vision and its meaning? (To validate Jeremiah's call, God gave him a vision of an almond tree branch. Almond trees were, and still are, common in Israel. What's more, the Hebrew word for *almond* is like the Hebrew word for *watch*. So, every time Jeremiah saw an almond tree, he could remember that God was watching to make sure His words were being fulfilled. God was watching!)
3. What was the second vision and its meaning? (The second vision was a boiling pot tilted toward the south as it poured its hot contents on the nation of Judah. This represented God's judgment on the nation. God was going to use an enemy invasion from the north to inflict pain like that of the overflow of a scalding pot.)

This is an example of God using a wicked people to bring judgment on His people because of Judah's disobedience. They had been warned time after time to no avail.

4. How does God's communication with Jeremiah compare to the way God communicates His warnings today? (God's Word is our warning and call to repentance. Jeremiah's message is as real for us today as it was during his day for Judah.)
5. Why had God determined to judge the people of Judah? (Read verse 16)
6. What can we take away from these warnings today?

God's presence would have been a great encouragement to Jeremiah. In addition, understanding God's purposes would have helped the prophet. God was making it impossible for Jeremiah to deny his calling.

### **CHARGED! Read Jeremiah 1:17-19**

Here the call is repeated: Jeremiah was to be the mouthpiece of God. And he must either do that without fear or find himself paralyzed by the fear of God.

1. What three things did God instruct Jeremiah to do in verse 17? ("Get ready;" "stand up;" "tell them everything that I command you.")

God told Jeremiah that if he allowed the people to intimidate him God would terrify him, embarrass him, and make him contemptible in their eyes.

2. How was God really preparing Jeremiah for the task at hand? (Read verse 18)
3. How does knowing God is with us when we are sharing His Word give us confidence? (They are not rejecting me; they are rejecting God.)
4. Why might it be important for God's people to have thick skin? (We will face opposition and we need to keep on sharing the gospel no matter what we face.)

### **SUMMARY AND CHALLENGE!**

God gave Jeremiah the big job of proclaiming His message to the leaders of Judah. Then He promised to be with Jeremiah, giving him protection, as he did the job.

1. How can we encourage each other to live out God's calling for our lives faithfully? (Prayer. Words of encouragement.)
2. What impact does it make on your life when you realize God created you with a purpose?
3. What role does Scripture play in your carrying out the tasks God has called you to do?
4. If people are so inclined to ignore God's promise of judgment, then why proclaim it to them? (Even if only one responds to the gospel message it is worth the effort.)