

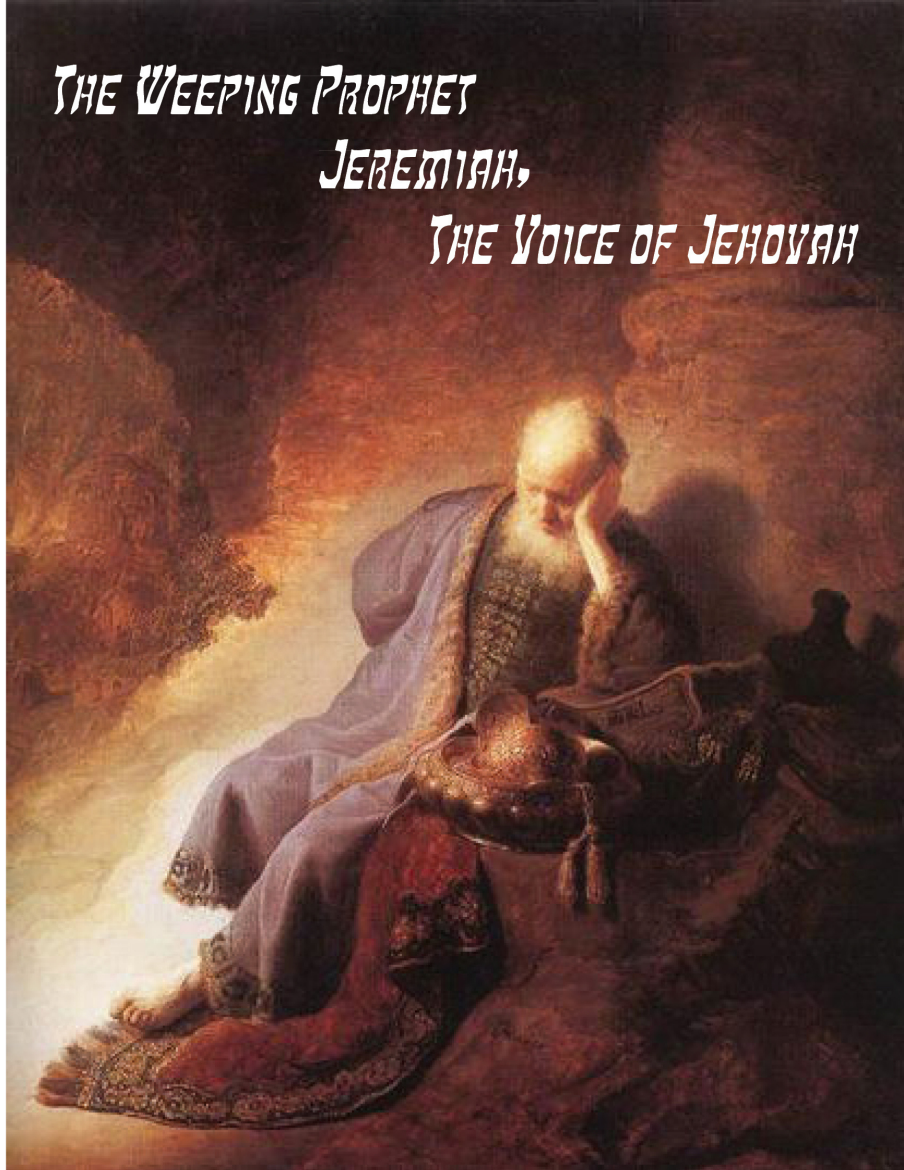
“Then Shephatiah ... heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken unto all the people, saying, ‘Thus saith the LORD, He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live; for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live ... This city shall surely be given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.’ Therefore the princes said unto the king, ‘We beseech thee, let this man be put to death ... Then Zedekiah the king said, ‘Behold, he is in your hand ... Then took they Jeremiah, and cast him into the dungeon ... that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire,’”

Jeremiah 38:1-6.

THE WEEPING PROPHET

JEREMIAH,

THE VOICE OF JEHOVAH



Dear Covenant Family and Friends of our LORD,
For days, I have waited upon the LORD for the words to write to you this month. Oh, I knew what this letter was going to be about (**Jeremiah**), however; the words [or the release] just were not there. This afternoon, while reading some of your letters and notes, a few have been included in this letter, God showed me how the message that He gave me, the cards and letters we received, and the **Book of Jeremiah** are tied together. Many times, we [fellow brothers and sisters in the LORD] may have felt like Jeremiah felt, abandoned and forsaken by our family - friends - and church, alone in the woods, not knowing which way to turn, stranded in a desert with no food or water, with just the hot blazing sun, and wild animals waiting to pounce upon us. However, we are not an island – isolated and forgotten by God and man. **NO**, we are all connected, linked, and tied together; **we are one in Jesus**. Sometimes we do not see the Light for the darkness that overshadows us. Sometimes the darkness is in our mind; sometimes it is in our spirit. Regardless, it is real to us and can be very heavy upon our soul even when we are walking in righteousness. The darkness can be so heavy that we may even doubt the existence of, or, the faithfulness of God. **Jeremiah** complained and

doubted, and yes, even Christians can doubt.

Without saying it, we know where the darkness comes from, satan himself. The darkness, or doubt, seems real and hopeless to us. The darkness is a spiritual shroud, or blanket, that surrounds us. Satan may try to put this darkness upon anyone at any time, regardless of how ‘**holy**’ we think we are, or how close we think we are walking with the LORD. We are still human and subject to the feelings and emotions that come from wearing a suit of flesh here on Earth. Many times, we do not have the human fellowship, or anchor, that everyone needs. Many Christians have felt this darkness was endless, and took their own life in desperation and despair.

THERE IS ONE ETERNAL TRUTH AND HOPE

We are never alone – **NEVER** without the LORD! Sometimes we must walk in faith that God is God, until we walk out of the darkness and into His **LIGHT**.

There are over 120 prophets and prophetesses of God listed in the Old Testament and 24 listed in the New Testament. Of these, only 16 prophets wrote the 17 prophetic works contained in the Old Testament. A prophet might be called, or named, a seer, diviner, dreamer, enchanter, or sorcerer, and was one regarded as being in contact with a spiritual entity or able to foreseeing events of the future.

However, there were hundreds, if not thousands, of unnamed prophets in Israel. If you were asked to name an Old Testament prophet, chances are that **Isaiah** would be the first prophet you would list. Rightly so as he is one of the four major prophets, and highly revered because of his foreseeing the birth – death – resurrection – and reign of the Eternal King of kings, and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ.

Isaiah's ministries included a healing for his king and God even stopped the movement of the Sun to confirm His Word. All of God's prophetic orators were rejected at one time in some manner, and many were made martyrs. Why? **Simply because God's messages of correction or judgment to His Children fell hard on the ears of rebellious – selfish – stiff necked people seeking their own pleasure.**

The same is true today, **Jeremiah's** life was no exception. He is called the **weeping prophet** because of the burden he had for Israel. (*"And when [Jesus] was come near [Jerusalem], He beheld the City, and wept over it,"* Luke 19:41). Jeremiah was relentless in confronting Jerusalem and Judah with God's Word against sin and moral failure. His life and prophesies spanned the rule of five kings.

I recently read a good analogy of the Church, *"The Church is like a large oceangoing vessel traveling from Earth to Heaven."* On this ship are all of the Christians that know Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This vessel stops from time to time to pick up new passengers (converts). Unfortunately, the closer the ship nears Heaven, more and more passengers are seen jumping overboard into the dark abyss of the **sin of self-pleasure and apathy**, forsaking their first love. In addition, the ship itself is in trouble, as it is taking on water, as sin enters the Church. The captain of the ship yells, cries, and pleads with the passengers to *"Man the pumps before we sink!"*

Old Testament Israel can be likened to the Christian ship traveling the dark seas with God as the captain and His prophets cry, *"Man the pumps before we drown!"*

This brings us to the book of **Jeremiah**. I was excited weeks ago when the LORD led me to this book as the topic of this letter. That was until I reread Jeremiah, taking notes for today, I prayed, *"LORD, are you sure You want to talk about this prophet? All I read is doom, gloom, and despair."* You will recall that in many ways, Jeremiah was special, if not unique. Because of the rampant sin in Jerusalem and Judah, God called Jeremiah, before his birth, to be His servant and prophet to Israel. *"Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations,"* Jeremiah 1:5. This implies to me that God caused Jeremiah to be conceived for the sole purpose of his calling to save the nation of Israel from their own destruction, much like Jesus was born to save Israel and the world from eternal **hell**. Thus, being conceived, sanctified, ordained, and called to be God's Prophet, put Jeremiah a head taller than other prophets and therefore deserves our attention.

Jeremiah means **"YHWH will rise."** As a child, we see some reservation of Jeremiah concerning his abilities to be God's spokesperson, much like Moses, *"Ah, LORD GOD! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child,"* (1:6). Just as sure as the LORD encouraged Moses, He instructed the young Jeremiah, *"The LORD*

said unto me, 'Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD,'" (1:7-8). Then, God touched him and put His Words in Jeremiah's mouth.

Obedying God's Word will remove sin from the heart and the planting of His Word in the heart will provide New Life and growth *"See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant,"* (1:10).

You would think that this call, message, instruction, and anointing from the **Great I Am** would be sufficient to carry Jeremiah above the waves of troubling times, trials, and pressures that he would encounter during his life. Often we read a book, like Jeremiah, in a day or two without remembering that it spans an entire lifetime.

Here is where we begin to see the comparison and application between Jeremiah's life and us, the Church of today. There is so much in the Old Testament for us to learn and use in our daily lives for the LORD. Yes, we live under Grace; however, the values and principles of God's teachings found in the Old Testament (and New Testament) should be our baseline for life. **God does not change.** What was sin then, is sin now, even though the Book of Jeremiah was written to and for the nation of Israel. Much of what was written in the Old Testament applied solely to Israel, those living under the Law, and to non-Christian Israel today. However, God's truth and righteous teaching is relevant for us.

What we read next is something we can see throughout the Word of God. It has happened many times in my life, yet, I did not realize that it was in God's play-book. *"The Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 'Jeremiah, what seest thou?' And I said, 'I see a rod of an almond tree.' Then said the LORD unto me, 'Thou hast well seen: for I will hasten My Word to perform it.' And the Word of the LORD came unto me the second time, saying, 'What seest thou?' And I said, 'I see a seething pot; and the face thereof is toward the North.' Then the LORD said unto me, 'Out of the North an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land,'"* (1:11-14). Again, *"The LORD [said] unto me, 'What seest thou, Jeremiah?' And I said, 'Figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.' Again the Word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 'Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set Mine Eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes, and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: And I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the Earth for their hurt, to be a reproach*

and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers,” (24:3-10).

First, God may give dreams or visions to His Children without explanation. It can be just a dream (vision) from the pizza we ate last night, or, it may be from God. We must seek the LORD for their meaning. When we do ask, He will guide us and explain the dreams from Him. Sometimes He instructs that the dream (vision) be conveyed to others, as its interpretation is only for them.

Second, when we read this, we see that this is the price that comes as a result of sin, sinful living, and sinful hearts. Yes, this is a result of their sin and not God's teaching or chastising hand of correction that so many pastors teach. *“Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you,”* (5:25). *“... because of the evil of your doings,”* (21:12). Israel could have turned these admonitions into blessings had they repented, worshiped, and followed the Great I AM, but, they did not.

Next, we see in the prophetic writings the often subtle words of assurance of Jesus' life, the end times, and the New Earth. *“I will set Mine eyes upon [Israel] for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know Me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be My people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto Me with their whole heart,”* (24:6-7).

Jeremiah's voice to Israel was one of repentance. When instructed, he called out sin as sin to kings and peasants. He was obedient to the Voice of God, even when the Words spoken, in obedience to God, were the source of his troubles. He stood when no else would stand against false teachers, lying prophets, and leaders, priests, and kings that walked in their flesh.

As in the voice of all prophets of God that proclaimed God's Words of warning and hard times (judgment) because of the sins of a nation (or person), God **always** calls for (offers) restoration after repentance, because He is a just God! God warns His Children first before disaster comes that brings pain, starvation, and death. God offers re-establishment of His Covenant Blessing if, and after, souls return to Him. *“Cursed be the man that obeyeth not the Words of this Covenant ... Obey My Voice, and do Them, according to all which I command you: so shall ye be My people, and I will be your God: That I may perform the Oath which I have sworn unto your fathers, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey, as it is this day,”* (11:3-5).

Just as sin weighs a heavy price upon the soul and flesh, so walking in righteousness brings its own price. Jeremiah was beaten, put in bonds, imprisoned, rejected, abused, mistreated, mocked, ridiculed, called a liar, held in captivity, sentenced to death, and left to die. Yet, 2600 years later, his words are read and studied by many, great and small. At times, he was under the prophetic pressures to the degree that he complained to God, *“O LORD, Thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in Thy longsuffering: know that for Thy sake*

I have suffered rebuke. Thy Words were found, and I did eat Them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts. I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of Thy hand: for Thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? wilt Thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?” (15:15-18). Have you walked in those shoes?

At times, Jeremiah questioned God's wisdom and judgment, *“Righteous art Thou, O LORD, when I plead with Thee: yet let me talk with Thee of Thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins. But Thou, O LORD, knowest me: Thou hast seen me, and tried mine heart toward Thee: pull them out like sheep for the slaughter, and prepare them for the day of slaughter. How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein? The beasts are consumed, and the birds; because they said, He shall not see our last end,”* (12:1-4).

Jeremiah also seemed to doubt the sovereignty of God, *“O LORD, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived: Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, every one mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the Word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily,”* (20:7-8). He even cursed the day of his birth, *“Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed,”* (20:14). Although the darkness of persecution weighed him down, the **fire** of God still burned within him, *“Then I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His Name. But His Word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay,”* (20:9). God assured Jeremiah of His Power and Faithfulness, *“I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible,”* (15:20-21).

Jeremiah saw and lived the trials and captivity that resulted from the sins of Israel's leaders and people. He never married and was carried captive to Egypt where he died. His words live on as a warning to all that sin has a price that **must** be paid. Even today, sin is slowly creeping into our families, churches, denominations, politics, and nation. Jeremiah lived in the Hope of God's faithful Grace while not wavering in his stand against sin.

Our Hope is in Jesus Christ!

We have a greater Grace in Jesus Christ. We are to stand spotless before the world, and yet we are to prosper and grow in Jesus, knowing that we have a *Father who knows our name* and has our back when we confront sin. We are to love the sinner, but not the sin. It is our job to *“pump out the dark water of sin in our lives, and patch the leaks in our boat.”* We are to be His examples of Love to the world, not arguing in strife or throwing our pearls before the swine. We are to show the world that Christ is alive and lives in us, the children of the Most High Creator of the Uni-

verse, wearing clean robes, waiting for our name to be called to meet Jesus in the Eastern Sky. We are *called* to be His ministers, to *proclaim* His Power in our works, to *share* His Word of Love, to *speak* His Word of redemption, to be the *hands* of healing to the sick, and to *guide* others to the saving Grace of the Cross. We can live in Him. We have the Holy Spirit of God to walk with us, to speak to us, to speak through us, and to never, ever, leave us alone in this world! *Greater is*

He that is in us than he that is in this world. Walk in the presence and power of His Holy Spirit. To God be all of the Glory, Honor, and Praise, for only He is Worthy!

Your Covenant Brother in Jesus Christ,

Phillip Buttram

Phillip L Buttram

Please - Tell us Your Story

We have received so many wonderful testimonies of God's Power, Love, and Moving in the lives of our Covenant Family. We want to share a few of them with you. Be lifted up and encouraged of what God has done and what He wants to do in your life. Please, write down your testimony of God's blessings, miracles, and answered prayers in your life and the lives of your family. Make and keep a record of God's Might and Glory in your life for you to review and rejoice, and a testimony of your legacy walking with God for your family to read, know, and remember the wonders of God, the Great I AM! *(These letters have not been corrected for spelling or grammar.)*

Before you read the following notes from our Covenant Family, I want to express, as best as I can, just how much your sweet notes, and letters mean to our GTS Family. Many days are long and hard, and your 'love' notes lift us up in the LORD. That is one of the mysteries of life, how total strangers in the flesh can have the same Love and Fellowship [in the Spirit] even though we have never met face to face. What a wonderful time we will have in Heaven, when the entire Family of God meets for the first time. Oh, the wonder of it all, how God knits our hearts together in the oneness of His Love and of His Son, Jesus. Praise my LORD forever and forever!

Greetings Brothers and Sisters, I hope and pray that you are well and in good health! I rejoice with you in how the LORD is using you and the ministry your involved with. I may not be able to do much because of my situation (prison) which brings limitations and barriers, but, I've learned that no fence, or wall, not time or distance can hinder prayer. So I have and do pray taking God at His word; (Jere 33:3; Ps 50:15; Phil 4:6-7; matt 11:28-30). You have and always will be in my prayers! I thank you for the tracts your send and the calenders. I think a lot of guys on my tier look forward to hem. I've had one ask me already. God bless all of you! You do a wonderful work! Keep it up! Heb 6:10-12; 10:35-36; Gal 6:9. Sincerely, brother PH, Smyrna, DC *[We send thousands of new calendars into prisons every year.]*

To all who work in this ministry, I pray for you daily. May our LORD god continue to bless your ministry - not only in this 'traditional' Christmas Holiday season, but every month of the year and beyond. Truly you are fulfilling 'the Great Commission' as you stand steadfast in our blessed Savior's Love. AMEN! Love in our blessed LORD, HT, Cresson, TX *[It is yours prayers that keep us going.]*

Brother Buttram and ministry family. God bless and keep you all safe and healthy in the New Year. Happy Birthday Jesus!!! This [tract] was dropped in my bag when I made a purchase at the "Ark" bookstore in Oct this year. I still share the tracts you have sent me in the [past. Thank you for the ministry. I wanted to share this with you. How precious you all are. Thank you for your faithfulness and love of the LORD. [My husband] went to be with the LORD [last Nov 2018] and I apologize for not letting you

know sooner. Much has happened, we were married 70 ½ years, so my life has been different since then. My son and his wife now live on the farm and he has delivered my mail monthly. Thank you for the most beautiful Christmas Card. PH, Waller TX *[We are so thankful for Christian couples that live a life before the LORD, and the world, and blessed to call them Covenant Friends in Jesus.]*

Would it be possible to get these tracts [100 each of 9 titles] to me B-4 Christmas? I decided not to re-copy the list - I think it is all readable. I have no idea how much to send but I will send \$300 - the xtra you can use for the new furnace. Blessings CU, Peoria IL *[This order was shipped the day we received the this note.]*

Dear GTS, Blessings and greetings to you and yours in Jesus most blessed and Holy, Holy, Holy, name. How bout a praise report? The last tract that I got from you about emotions and the past touch a lot of people here [in prison]. One guy came up to me crying. Another was real affected - he said he dreamed about his past. Would you please send me 50 copies of "American, Sodom And Gomorrah," 2 copies "Amazing Gospel" and 2 copies "heart of Stone" comic books and I thank you. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you and yours. Always, TC, Clio AL [Easterling Correctional Facility] *[How refreshing to see hungry men seeking and open to the Word of God in prison.]*



For weeks we have been receiving request for our six-pocket tract rack with tracts. it is so encouraging to know that our covenant Family wants to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ by placing a Tract Rack filled with Gospel Tracts in their church or place of business. God's Word is the Light of the world, and help to those who find it.