

RUN WITH HORSES



Run with the Horses – The Pursuit for Manhood

*“So, Jeremiah, if you’re worn out in this footrace with men,
what makes you think you can race against horses?”
– Jeremiah 12:5 (The Message)*

We long to live life to the fullest. We desire to merge freedom and spontaneity with purpose and meaning. Why then do we, as men, often find our lives boring, adventure-less, and fighting addiction to medicate our pain? Or else so busy, so full of chaos, but still devoid of fulfillment? How do we learn to risk, to trust, to pursue wholeness and excellence—to run with the horses in the midst of life? More is known of the life of Jeremiah than any other prophet, and his life is far more significant than his teaching. This study will be a model of manhood as portrayed by the prophet Jeremiah.

Exiled – I Want to Go Home

Psalm 119:32; Jeremiah 29:1-14

Meet Jeremiah

1. **North & South Kingdoms** → The nation of Israel was split after the death of Solomon. His son Rehoboam was set to become the next king. One of Solomon's servants, Jeroboam rebelled. The ten tribes of the north rejected Rehoboam and embraced the leadership of Jeroboam. The two tribes of the south—Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to King Rehoboam. The result of tribal discord and political unrest resulted in the split.
2. **END OF AN ERA** → The prophet Jeremiah witnessed the fall of Judah in 586 B.C. Jeremiah's prophecies declare the end of one era and announce the beginning of another. The law of God given to Moses had decreed that violations of the covenant would result in the removal of God's blessings and the imposition of the sanctions of the covenant. Jeremiah's ministry both announces and witnesses the imposition of the final covenantal curse upon Judah, the curse of exile. Jeremiah, however, also bears witness to God's intense love for his people. Judgment is not God's last word for Judah according to Jeremiah, and he consoles his readers with numerous prophecies of restoration and salvation beyond exile.

Jeremiah – The Experience of Trauma

1. **TRAUMATIC & TERRIFYING** → The Jews were exiled to Babylon in 587 B.C. Babylon is the most famous city from ancient Mesopotamia whose ruins lie in modern-day Iraq, 59 miles southwest of Baghdad. New culture, strange customs, the language incomprehensible, and the landscape oddly flat and featureless. The weather was different.
2. **ADAPTE TO CHANGE** → We all experience exile – exiled from the womb and begin life in strange and harsh surroundings. We are exiled from our homes at an early age and find ourselves in the terrifying and demanding world of school. We are exiled from our hometowns and have to find our way in new states and cities. Trauma measured by EMLI.
3. **STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LANDS** → The essential meaning of exile is that we are where we don't want to be. We are separated from home. The place of exile may boast a higher standard of living. Being exiled can lead to growth & freedom.

Jeremiah – Writes a Letter

1. **REJECTED** → The reason for Israel's exile is clear enough: Jeremiah and other prophets had preached that the nation's stability and security depended on faithfulness to the love of God. That message was scorned and rejected. The Babylonian army conquered the city of Jerusalem and selected the leading people of the city of Jerusalem for deportation. Jeremiah was ignored – even the Babylonians did not consider him important enough to exile.
2. **SELF-PITY** → Religious leaders nurtured the Jews self-pity. Ahab, Zedekiah, and Shemiah were prophets who called attention to the unfairness of their plight and stirred the pots of discontent.
3. **SHALOM** → Live whole lives—live by faith in the circumstances you are provided this very day. Elasah and Gemariah arrive in Babylon with a message from Jeremiah. “Don't let all those so-called preachers and know-it-alls take you in with their lies. Jeremiah's letter is a rebuke and a challenge: “Quit sitting around feeling sorry for yourselves.” Deal with the reality of life, discover truth, create beauty, act out of love.

Jeremiah – Living Your Best

1. **LIVE BY FAITH** → Jeremiah's letter challenged the Jews to make themselves at home in Babylon and work for the country's welfare. Pray for Babylon's well-being. If things go well for Babylon, things will go well for you. Trust God.
2. **GOD IS WITH YOU!** → "God is here with me. What I am experiencing right now on ground that was created by Him and with people whom He loves. I am full of fear. I don't know my way around. I have much to learn. I'm not sure I can make it. Change is hard. Developing intimacy among strangers is always a risk. But it that is what it means to be alive and human, I will do it."
3. **INVITATION & PROMISE** → Accept God's message given by Jeremiah. The people settled down to find out what it meant to be God's people in the place they did not want to be—in Babylon. The result was that this became the most creative period in the entire history of God's people. They did not lose their identity; they discovered it. They learned how to walk with God. They lost everything that they thought was important and found God. They embraced the everyday, but did not become absorbed in it.

ACTION: Journal This!

1. When was the first time you were homesick?
2. What has been the most catastrophic event of your life?
3. What makes you feel like an exile today?

