

**Message #4****Jeremiah 1:4-10**

F. B. Huey, in his commentary, said what is described in these verses “changed Jeremiah’s life” (*Jeremiah/Lamentations*, p. 50). Jeremiah would need to reflect on this information for the rest of his life and ministry.

Let’s put in perspective what Jeremiah would live through in his 40 plus years:

- 1) Josiah is the last godly king in existence, who gets killed at Megiddo by Neco (640 BC-609 BC).
- 3) Jehoahaz is king for 3 months and is conquered by Neco and taken to Egypt in chains.
- 4) Jehoiakim, Neco changed from Eliakim, reigns over Judah 11 years and he was evil (609 BC-598 BC).
- 5) Jehoiachin (Coniah/Jeconiah) reigns 3 months and he is evil - 598-597 BC.
- 6) Zedekiah he reigns 11 years and was evil and taken captive by Babylonians (597-586 BC). He had his eyes put out by Nebuchadnezzar (II Kings 25:6-7).

Jeremiah watched all of this. He lived through every bit of this.

**JEREMIAH BEGINS HIS PROPHETIC WRITING BY COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDING AND EMPHASIZING THE ELECTIVE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN HIS LIFE, HIS CALLING AND HIS MINISTRY.**

This was a critical thought to Jeremiah. He needed this because no one else was on his side. When we come to this text, we cannot help but notice the personal pronoun “I.” This is a very personal section between God and Jeremiah. When we are seeing a world falling apart, and we are trying to understand and apply the word of God in a world that does not want it, what is in these verses is something not only Jeremiah needed, but so do we.

**FACTUAL REALITY #1 – The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 1:4**

Notice what is said here. **Jeremiah did not come to the word of the LORD; the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah.** This is the sovereign word of God and the sovereign work of God. Don’t miss this. Your desire to know God’s word did not originate with you, but with God.

Right at the outset of his life and ministry, Jeremiah makes it very clear that what he is writing is, in fact, the inspired word of God. He did not sit down one day and say well I guess I’ll write some stories of what my life was like. He wrote the inspired word of God, which came to him. What we learn in this verse is that God actually spoke to Jeremiah. So this is not a vision or a dream, this is direct verbal communication. As Charles Feinberg said, Jeremiah actually heard “the divine word” (*Jeremiah*, p. 383).

Jeremiah was not looking for this or expecting this. He was not politicking for this job nor was he in school preparing for it. God singled him out and spoke to Jeremiah. **What a corrupt world actually needs is to be confronted with God’s word. It needs the word of God.**

**FACTUAL REALITY #2** – God knew Jeremiah before He formed Jeremiah. **1:5a**

If ever you have doubted the sovereign foreknowledge and elective choice of God concerning individual human beings, the matter is settled right here. Look at the verbs in this verse that stress the elective sovereignty of God: “formed”; “knew”; “consecrated”; “appointed.” This is foreknowledge and predestination and election and commission all wrapped up in one verse at the ultimate level.

God was the one who sovereignly sanctioned the formation of the life of Jeremiah long before a man and woman even met and long before he was conceived.

Now we know from **verse 1** that Jeremiah had biological parents, but it was not the biological parents who were responsible for the formation of the baby; it was God. When children ask you where babies come from, the proper theological answer is they come from God. No child is here by accident.

The verb “form” (yasar) literally means to give shape to something as a potter would when working with clay. God is responsible for the actual formation and shape of a baby in the mother’s womb (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 353). **Notice the personal pronoun “you.” Jeremiah was a real person in the formation and gestation phase in the mother’s womb.**

The Hebrew word “knew” (yada) is a word that speaks of intimate, observable knowledge of the individual God is forming. Every baby is known and formed by God. There is no such thing as an accidental pregnancy (*Ibid.*, pp. 333-334).

The word “consecrate” (qadesh) means God declared that Jeremiah was set apart as a sacred, holy man before He was even born (*Ibid.*, p. 725).

The word “appointed” (nathan) to give someone or cause someone to receive something. God literally caused Jeremiah to become a prophet and gave him the prophetic ministry (*Ibid.*, p. 573).

This was all done by the sovereignty of God before Jeremiah was even conceived.

**FACTUAL REALITY #3** – God consecrated Jeremiah before Jeremiah was born. **1:5b**

What this means is that God set apart Jeremiah in the womb as a sacred vessel before he was even born. If you want to know why you are here and what you are supposed to do in life, you invite Jesus Christ into your life and ask God to direct you according to His will. He is the one who saved you.

Now you may be thinking, well this type of election is only for a guy like Jeremiah. That is where you are wrong.

Isaiah said that “The LORD called Me from the womb; from the body of my mother and named me” (Is. 49:1).

Paul said exactly the same thing about his own life and ministry. He said that God set him apart from his mother’s womb to preach the grace gospel (Gal. 1:15-16).

According to John 15:16 - Jesus said the same kind of thing to His disciples, “You did not choose Me, but I chose you.”

But then God’s word takes it to another level. According to Ephesians 1:3-4 - God chose us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

You are no accident. You have been chosen by God, just like Jeremiah. The gifts you have, the skills you have, the blessings you have are from a sovereign God who knew you, formed you, and consecrated you, called you, saved you, justified you and will glorify you.

**FACTUAL REALITY #4** – God appointed Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations. **1:5c**

Philip Ryken said Jeremiah was not “just set apart for salvation, but for vocation. God had a work for him to do” (*Jeremiah*, p. 22). Jeremiah was appointed by God to be a prophet. The actual word “prophet” (nabi) is used over 300 times in the O.T.. He would forth tell God’s truth and he would foretell God’s future.

Jeremiah would have an international ministry outreach. **Jeremiah is the only prophet who is specifically said to be an appointed prophet to the nations.** All other prophets were primarily prophets for Israel and Judah. Although prophets like Daniel and Isaiah, Ezekiel and Amos, communicated oracles and truth to the nations, Jeremiah is specifically assigned to communicate to the nations.

Jeremiah will have a major prophetic ministry to Israel and Judah, but he will have a special ministry proclaiming truth to the nations. One of his messages that he would communicate to the nations is that God’s grace would not only reach Israel, but also reach the nations and eventually many would be in Jerusalem in a right relationship with God (Jer. 3:12,17).

The very existence of Jeremiah was due to the sovereign elective will and choice of God.

Now that is what Jeremiah says he learned from the word of the LORD. I believe there is something to see here that is very important and very theological. God obviously wants His people to know about the doctrine of His sovereign election. He communicated this to Jeremiah when he was young.

Often times you will hear people at church say well don’t get into election because that doctrine is only for the mature and not for babes. Well this text contradicts that.

People need to understand that God ordained their life; God planned their life; God caused their life; God called them and saved them by His grace and by His sovereignty. You are not an afterthought when it comes to God. He formed you and He saved you at the age you believed in Him.

**FACTUAL REALITY #5** – Jeremiah initially objected to the elective calling of God. **1:6**

When God revealed this calling to Jeremiah, he was overwhelmed. The first thing you spot about Jeremiah is his amazing concept of God. He addresses Him as “Jehovah, Adonai” (LORD GOD). His concept of God is that He is the sovereign, almighty, covenant God of Israel who can do whatever it is He wants to do. He rules overall and is above all.

Now an interesting question is whether or not this is humility, modesty or faithlessness. I tend to think it is the mark of real spirituality. Whenever someone has really been called by God, they have their doubts. Moses did; Isaiah did; David did.

As Charles Feinberg said, “Jeremiah *was*, struck with terror over the magnitude of the task...” (*Ibid.*, p. 383). God is telling this to a young man.

Now after God got done telling him about his life and calling, Jeremiah comes with two arguments as to why he thinks God made some mistake:

**Argument #1** - Jeremiah reasons that he lacks verbal eloquence. **1:6a**

Jeremiah knew that one of the tasks of a prophet was public speaking. Jeremiah says look God, I am not a good public speaker. Apparently he had not taken any courses on public speaking or homiletics because he says I don’t even know how to speak. Public speaking is very intimidating and it is more intimidating when you must communicate God’s word.

**Argument #2** - Jeremiah reasons that he lacks mature age. **1:6b**

In fact, what is so ironic about this is that Moses felt he was too old for the assignment and Jeremiah felt he was too young for the assignment.

The Hebrew word “child” (*naar*) is used in a variety of ways. It was used of Moses when he was in the basket in the bulrushes of the Nile river (Ex. 2:6). But it is also used to refer to a “young man” who was part of Abraham’s military force (Gen. 14:14, 24). It was also used of Joshua when he was in his mid-40’s (Ex. 33:11). Most assume that Jeremiah was in his 20’s when God revealed all of this to him.

Don’t get into the habit of making excuses for why you cannot do what God has called you to do. No matter your level of understanding, you can speak up for God and for His truth. You may question yourself, but do not question God.

When it comes to serving God, there really ought to be a sense of inadequacy. No one is worthy of serving God. Even Paul said, “who is adequate for these things” (II Cor. 2:16).

**FACTUAL REALITY #6** – God refutes the objections of Jeremiah. **1:7-8**

God NEVER makes any mistake when He chooses someone to salvation and service. God would not accept Jeremiah’s excuses. The LORD said to Jeremiah, do not say you are a youth.

**Reason #1** - Because everywhere I send you I will go with you. **1:7a**

You don’t have to worry about your youth because I am the Ancient of Days and I’ll be with you every step of the way.

**Reason #2** - Because all that I command you is what you will speak. **1:7b**

You don’t have to worry about your speaking ability because I will tell you what I want you to say. I will give you your messages.

Your job will be to communicate what I tell you to communicate. This is the responsibility of a man of God: accurately communicate the word of God to people.

**Reason #3** - Because you do not need to be afraid because I will deliver you. **1:8**

This statement to not be afraid indicates that Jeremiah would face fearful opposition. But even with this being true, Jeremiah’s argumentation did not matter. God says I will be with you and I will direct you.

**FACTUAL REALITY #7** – God personally touched Jeremiah. **1:9-10**

God Himself touched Jeremiah’s mouth and gave him three specific messages:

**(Message #1)** - I have put My words in your mouth. **1:9b** - Jeremiah’s words would actually be God’s word. He was the spokesman for God.

**(Message #2)** - I have appointed you over the nations and kingdoms. **1:10a**

**(Message #3)** - Your ministry will be both negative and positive. **1:10c**

This is very important to see. Jeremiah would have a ministry that would be both destructive and constructive. You will pluck up and break down; you will destroy and overthrow; but you will also build and plant.

Romans 8:28-30. 1) God has created you. 2) God has called you. 3) God has consecrated you. 4) God has equipped you. 5) God will enable you.

When we live in a world falling apart, these are great things to remember. God is still looking out for His elect. We can move forward and get the job done for His glory.