

Judgment and Promise:

God Speaks through the Prophet Jeremiah, #1

“The God Who Speaks”

Jer. 1

--CEFC 1/17/21; 9/24/95

Perhaps I shouldn't admit this,

but I confess that I sometimes have doubts about my faith.

I find myself asking, “Is this stuff I believe really true?”

“Could I have been deceived in believing that there really is

this omnipotent yet benevolent God

who cares about each individual person who ever lived?

A God who works out everything according to some grand scheme?

who intervenes in the world in miraculous ways,

and who has actually come to earth as a man?

Maybe I only believe all this because I want it to be true,

or because it's something that is believed by people around me

whom I admire?

or maybe, I've been brainwashed into believing it?

How can it be true,

when so many people don't believe it,

or at least live as if it didn't really matter?”

Maybe it's all some crazy conspiracy theory like QAnon!

I sometimes ask myself these kinds of questions--

and, frankly, I would be very surprised if you never asked them yourself.

But one of the exercises I find helpful in dispelling those doubts

is considering the alternative--

What if it weren't true?

What if the atheists and naturalists were right--

What if there was no God

and this material world was all there is?--

No God at work crafting the cosmos,

no divine design

no ultimate purpose or plan.

What if the biologist Ernst Haeckel spoke the truth when he said,

“The cell consists of matter . . . composed chiefly of carbon

with an admixture of hydrogen, nitrogen, and sulphur.

These component parts, properly united,

produce the soul and body of the animated world,

and suitably nourished, become man.

With this single argument the mystery of the universe is explained,

the Deity annulled, and a new era of infinite knowledge ushered in.”

That was written in 1877,

but more recently, in his book

The First Three Minutes:

A Modern View of the Origin of the Universe,

the brilliant theoretical physicist Steven Weinberg says something very similar--

He writes: "It is almost irresistible for humans to believe

that we have some special relation to the universe,

that human life is not just a more-or-less farcical outcome

of a chain of accidents reaching back to the first three

minutes,

but that we were somehow built in from the beginning."

But then Weinberg hastens to tell us that what is almost irresistible to believe

is not true--

there is no special relationship.

Human life is but a purposeless consequence of accidental origins

shaped by impersonal processes.

"It is very hard to realize that this . . . is . . .

an overwhelmingly hostile universe. . . ." he writes.

"The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless."¹

This is the alternative, it seems,

if what we believe is not true.

It's all pointless.

Just consider the implications of this view of the universe without God

on our understanding of morality.

One bio-ethicist writes:

¹Cited in Henry, *Christian Mindset*, p. 12.

“We can no longer base our ethics on the idea that human beings
are a special form of creation, singled out from all other animals,
and alone possessing an immortal soul.
Once the religious mumbo-jumbo has been stripped away,
we may continue to see normal members of our species
as possessing greater capacities . . . than member of any other
species;
but we will not regard as sacrosanct
the life of each and every member of our species. . . .
Species membership alone . . . is not morally relevant.”²

This is the alternative, you see--

if God is not there, if the universe is eternally silent.

Who are we, then?

What does it mean to be human?

Astronomer Carl Sagan put it so well,

as he looked at the consequences of his own materialistic atheism--

“We are like a newborn baby,” he says,

“left on a doorstep, with no note explaining who it is.”³ /

It's interesting that Carl Sagan, during his lifetime, became a leader in the effort

to search for extraterrestrial, intelligent life.

It is one of the driving forces of astronomy today--

²Cited in Colson, *Kingdoms*, p. 74.

³from his book, *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*

the search for some glimmer of life out there--

some signal from beyond that we are not alone.

Though we have no cosmic parent,

we may at least have siblings.

Perhaps around some distant star, a planet like ours exists,

which could support life like us--

perhaps we could receive signals, and communicate--

In this search, it is as if Sagan was crying out,

"Is anybody there? Please answer us!"

But so far there is nothing, no signals from the heavens--

we remain lost and alone in the cosmos.

What happens to notions of right and wrong and good and evil?--

They become merely cultural conventions.

What basis is there for the idea of justice, or even truth itself--

if we are all merely collections of atoms thrown together

by the impersonal laws of physics

interacting randomly over a nearly endless stretch of time?

If all we believe is what science can tell us,

this is the story we are given in our society today.

This is the alternative,

if what we believe about God and his work in the world is not true.

In such a universe, I can experience pleasure,

but how can my life have any meaning?

For meaning is a personal concept--

it involves things like purpose and intention,

and good and evil.

Only persons can love.

In a world without God, I can create my own meaning, I suppose

but ultimately that's not enough--

for in the end, death nullifies everything.

"When I die," in the atheist Bertrand Russell's words, "I rot."

But even that statement is misguided—

for there will no "I" left to rot.

Human life becomes absurd--

if the cosmos is empty and silent

and we human beings are alone without God.\

All this may seem a long way from the Book of Jeremiah

which will be the focus of our study for the next several months.

But, at its core, I think that this is what the whole book is really all about.

It declares that we are not alone.

Jeremiah tells us about a personal God who speaks,

and it is in his speaking that he gives meaning to human life.

The whole book is grounded in a claim that God has revealed himself and his truth

to a man named Jeremiah,

and through Jeremiah to

us.

I want you to see that it is this revelation from the outside--

this personal address from the God who is there

that provides the framework, the context,

for understanding my own life as an individual,

for understanding the corporate life of the people of God,

and even for understanding the nations of the world.

It is a word from God that came to Jeremiah--

and it is that same word from God that comes to us today.

And having a word from God makes all the difference in the world.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Jeremiah—

1:1-- We're told in the opening verse of this book,

that these are "**The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah.**"

But in v. 2 we are immediately informed that these words are more than that--

"**The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah**

in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah,"

and that word of the Lord continued to come to him

over a period of forty years.

In this first chapter there is no doubt that God's words are important in this chapter—

"The word of the Lord" is mentioned four times (vv. 2,4,11,13),

twice God commands Jeremiah to speak the words he gives him(vv., 7,17)

and in v. 9 the Lord says **"I have put my words in your mouth,"**

and in v. 12 the Lord says, **"I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."**

The fundamental claim of the book is that there is somebody there--

the cosmos is not cold and silent, for God has spoken.

And his word has power—

later in the book is likened to **"a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces"** (Jer. 23:29).

What God says is true, and it will come to pass.

And Jeremiah records for us what the Lord said

when that word of the Lord first came to him--

v. 5—The Lord says to him—

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

before you were born I set you apart;

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Suddenly Jeremiah's whole life is put in a new perspective.

His life was no accident--

there was nothing random or arbitrary about it.

From the beginning, he was chosen by God.

His life was formed by the hands of God--

who molded him into existence like a master craftsman.

Notice, this passage doesn't claim some miraculous intervention of God
into the natural processes of human conception and birth.
Jeremiah's life came into being through what appears to us as
the entirely random event of one particular sperm
impregnating one particular egg,
creating this one unique person who would be named
Jeremiah.

The claim being made here is that that was more than merely a natural process—
it was at the same time a supernatural event,
for God was involved in every stage of that natural process
to produce this unique person named Jeremiah
who was to be set apart by God for a special divine purpose.
Jeremiah's life came into being through the purpose of God--
it was a part of a divine design. /

And Jeremiah was no mere tool in the hands of some distant tyrannical potentate--
the Lord's connection with him was personal--
"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,"--

This is not just an affirmation of God's omniscience--
his ability to know all things.

The verb "to know" here is used of a personal relationship--
some would translate it "Before I formed you in the womb I chose you"
or even "I set my love on you."⁴

⁴ Cf., e.g., Amos 3:2.

This man's life was set in the context of the eternal purposes of God,
working themselves out in the world of space and time--

"Before you were born I set you apart,"

the word here is "**sanctified**"

It means to be consecrated for God's use--

just as certain vessels and utensils were consecrated

for use in temple worship.

"You belong to me, Jeremiah.

and I have a special purpose for you--

I have given you a divine appointment

as a prophet to the nations."

A prophet is one who speaks for God to the people.

The God who speaks uses human beings as his voice.

God speaks through human words.

And Jeremiah is commissioned to be the human agent

of that divine communication. /

Jeremiah's immediate reaction to this call of God

is not unlike that of Moses and Isaiah when God spoke to them--

They sensed their unworthiness and inadequacy for such a responsibility.

And so does Jeremiah--

v. 6-- "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak;

I am too young."

He is a rAO™ An in Hebrew--

That word has a wide range--

but it probably puts Jeremiah in his mid- to late-teens.

Again, the issue here is one of **speaking**--

but it is not whether God could speak--Jeremiah knew he could.

The question here is whether Jeremiah could speak.

But the Lord says whether Jeremiah felt himself capable of speaking was irrelevant--
v. 7--**But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.'**

You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you." . . .
v. 9-- **"Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me,**
'Now, I have put my words in your mouth.'"

"If I can speak through Balaam's donkey, Jeremiah,

I can certainly speak through you," the Lord says. /

In a great mystery of creation,

God had fashioned human beings in his image--

such that we are somehow capable of relating personally with our Creator.

God has designed us so that he can speak to us,

and then so that we may speak for him to others.

In fact, the Lord had shaped Jeremiah's entire life

so that he might be able to convey his message.

We're told in v. 1 that he was the son of Hilkiah,

who was a priest in the town of Anathoth,

just a couple of miles northeast of Jerusalem.

Jeremiah would have been well acquainted

with the words of all the prophets who had come before him,

and with the religious history and traditions and practices of the nation.
Perhaps he would have even had the political and family connections
to allow him access into positions of power.

The Lord would use the human personality, intellect, experience,
and even the family background of this man
to communicate precisely what he wanted to say.

v. 7--the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.'

You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you."

The Lord assures him—

"Don't doubt your capabilities, Jeremiah,

for I will be with you, speaking through you.

and in v. 8—"Do not be afraid" –

"Don't doubt your safety, Jeremiah,

for I will be with you,

and I will rescue you."

The Lord had spoken,

and so Jeremiah must now speak.

He says later that the word of God was in his heart like a fire,

he could not hold it in,

though it brought him insult and reproach all day long (20:8-9).

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah,

and his life would never be the same.

But Jeremiah was a **prophet**, one of the elite few in all of history
to be called by God to that role.

So we may ask, How can his experience possibly relate to us?

Certainly, in his specific role, Jeremiah was unique,
but in a general sense his relationship with God was not unusual at
all.

The New Testament speaks of every believer
in words very similar to those used here.

In Ephesians 1, Paul writes--

**“God chose us in Christ before the creation of the world
to be holy and blameless in his sight. ...
having been predestined according to the plan of him
who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will”** (Eph. 1:4,11).

Or in Rom. 8:29--

**“For those God foreknew he also predestined
to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ...”**

These words aren't meant to rattle our minds
as we reflect on the riddles of time and eternity--
and of God's choice of us
and our choice of him.

These are meant to be words of assurance--
words that connect our lives to the eternal purpose of God.

We do not come into this world by accident,
as merely the chance encounter of sperm and egg.

We talk about family planning--
and with genetic advances,
that is taking on a new, and possibly frightening, meaning,
but no amount of human planning can create the way God does.

I remember Susan and I having a discussion that went on for hours one night,
talking about the pros and cons of having another child
at that point in our lives,
and the very next week we discovered that she was already pregnant!

Human procreation is more than a mere biological process;
it involves the inscrutable plan of God.

“I have a purpose for your life,” the Lord says to us.

“I have had my eye on you before you even had eyes to see.”

“And now I have called you to myself.

As one who has entrusted his life to Jesus Christ,
you belong to me.

I have chosen you, I have sanctified you for my service--

I have *set you apart*

so that I might *send you out* in my name

to represent me in the world.”

This is how God speaks to every believer who is united to Jesus Christ. /

And it is this word of the Lord

that gives our lives a whole new meaning--

Through this word of God, we come into a relationship with our Creator--

we are in touch with the Eternal.

We are no longer orphans left on the doorstep with no note--

we become sons and daughters of the King of Heaven and Earth,

given a divine appointment, with a calling of eternal significance.

If you are a Christian here this morning,

do you understand your life in these terms?

Do you appreciate just who you are in the sight of God?

This is the meaning that the word of the Lord gives to an individual life---

to Jeremiah's life--

and to yours and mine.

The word of God came to Jeremiah,

but this word was given to him to declare to others--

particularly to his fellow Israelites--the people of God.

And a summary statement of God's message through is found in v.10--

"See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down,

to destroy and overthrow,

to build and to plant."

To understand the significance of this message

we need to appreciate the tumultuous times in which it was given.

Jeremiah began to speak during the thirteenth year of the reign of King Josiah.

This is the year 626 B.C.--

and it was at the outset of a time of great national revival.

You see, Josiah was a rare bird in Israel—for he was a good king.

Josiah deplored the idolatry that had so permeated the land,

especially during the reign of his grandfather Manasseh.

Manasseh had built altars to the Canaanite god Baal throughout the country,

and even in the temple of the Lord.

He had practiced sorcery and divination, consulting mediums and spiritists,

and had sacrificed his own son in a pagan ritual.

“Manasseh led the people astray,” we read in 2 Kings, “so that they did more evil than the nations the Lord had destroyed before the Israelites.” (21:9)

Josiah launched a reform movement that lasted some thirty years,

but, unfortunately, the changes were only superficial.

After his death the people quickly reverted back to their old ways

during the reigns of his royal successors--

Jehoiakim and Zedekiah.

It was a time of great religious turmoil,

and Jeremiah would be speaking truth to power,

addressing both the royal and priestly establishment in Israel.

And it was a tempestuous time on the international scene, too.

The mighty power of the Assyrians to the east was waning
after they had ruled that part of the world for over a century.

The Egyptians were vying with the Babylonians
for the position on the top of the mountain now left vacant.

Everything seemed up for grabs--
but already in the introductory verses of this book
we can see where this is all heading.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah
v.3-- “down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah ...,
when the people of Jerusalem *went into exile.*”

The Exile of 586 B.C.--
That was the low point in the nation’s history--
when the city of Jerusalem was besieged and then destroyed
by the marauding Babylonians.

The temple of God was leveled to the ground,
and the people of God were carried away to a distant land.

It was an unthinkable defeat for the people of God--
this people who enjoyed a covenant relationship with the Lord--
this people who had once brought the Pharaoh of Egypt to his knees
and had driven the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Perizites and all the other -ites

out of the land the Lord had promised them.

They were to be defeated, destroyed, and exiled to a faraway land.

And the people of God would have many doubts to wrestle with.

How could this happen?

What did this mean?

Where was the Lord Yahweh in all of this?

Was he still on their side?

Was he really God after all?

It is in this period, and to these very questions, that Jeremiah speaks the word of the Lord.

And it is God's word that gives meaning to the events of those days.

The Lord speaks through his prophet

and explains what is happening even as these events unfold.

And the essence of his message is that

the Lord is a holy God, a God of righteousness,

and his covenant relationship with Israel must be understood

within a framework of moral responsibility

and exclusive allegiance.

Those who disregard that moral demand of loyalty to the Lord

are subject to the inevitability of his judgment.

v. 16 makes it clear--

"I will pronounce my judgments on my people

because of their wickedness in forsaking me,
in burning incense to other gods
and in worshiping what their hands have made.”

The Lord will uproot and tear down;
he will destroy and overthrow.

This is an affirmation that this is a moral universe.

We don't know that simply by observing that good is always rewarded
and evil is always punished.

In fact, quite often our experience in life could lead us to think quite the opposite--

The guy who is a real jerk in the office,
and is always lying on his reports--
he gets promoted before you do!

Bullies often get their way,
the weak are trampled by the strong,
tyrants seem to prosper.

Where's the justice in this world?

No, we don't believe that this is ultimately a just and moral universe

because of what we see,

but because of what we hear--

what we hear from God.

He has told us what he will do in judgment--

sometimes in this world, but certainly beyond this world.

That is our ground for believing that what is right

will ultimately be seen to be right and be rewarded as such.

Jeremiah will declare a message of judgment to God's people—

a judgment leading to exile.

And already, as readers of these opening verses,

we know that his words spoke truth. /

But at the same time,

the Lord through Jeremiah will speak a word of hope.

for through God's judgment of his people comes the prospect of redemption.

For the God who destroys and overthrows

will also build and plant.

You get a hint of this hope in v.17--

which in the Hebrew presents a strong contrast.

In v. 16 the Lord pronounces his judgment on his people,

but in the next verse he says,

"But you, you Jeremiah--

"Get yourself ready,

Stand up and say to them whatever I command you.

Do not be terrified by them,

or I will terrify you before them.

Today I have made you a fortified city,

an iron pillar and a bronze wall

to stand against the whole land --

against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land.

They will fight against you but will not overcome you,

for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Jeremiah himself is pictured as a symbol of a faithful remnant,
a godly minority,
a fortified city,
that would emerge after the exile,
around whom the Lord will build a new people.

The Word of the Lord through Jeremiah to the people of God
at this critical juncture of their national life
gave meaning to that awful defeat,
and in that defeat, they learned afresh of the holiness of their God,
and ultimately of his gracious purposes.

So what can this word of God mean to the people of God today?

Certainly we will be exploring that in the weeks and months ahead,
but one significant echo of this word of God
gives meaning to the most significant moment of all
in God's dealing with his people.

Jesus, too, talked about destroying and raising up--

"Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days" he said (John 2:19).

He was referring in a cryptic manner

to what appeared to be the most crushing defeat of all--
the apparent victory of the powers of evil

when the Son of God died on a Roman cross.

The temple of Jesus own body would be destroyed,
but the Lord would raise it up again on the third day.

It is the word of God that gave meaning to that event, too--
allowing us to see that it was not for his own sin that Jesus died,
but for ours.
and that that cross was not a victory for Satan,
but the sign of his defeat.

By that word of God, the meaningless suffering of a righteous man
became the most meaningful event in all of human history.

It is the word of God that gives us hope as God's people
that his good purpose will prevail.
He will sustain his church, come what may--
as Jesus said, the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

It is the word of God that assures us that nothing can stand in the way
of the power of the gospel in the world—nothing.

The Word of God gives meaning—
it gives hope and assurance--**to the people of God.**

But finally, we spread the net still further--
beyond the individual,

beyond the people of God--
for finally, the word of God gives meaning even **to the nations of the world**,
for this word speaks of God's sovereign rule over all peoples.

You see this first in v.5--

The Lord appoints Jeremiah as a prophet to the *nations*.

Yahweh, the God of Israel, was not *just* the God of Israel--
he was not some local deity who shared power with other local deities--

he was the God of the whole earth.

All the nations were under his rule.

And the Lord uses two illustrations

to emphasize this point in his communication with the prophet.

v. 11-- "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly,
for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

This illustration loses some of its sparkle in English

for it hinges on a Hebrew play on words--

The word for "almond tree" is *shaqedh* (däéqDv),

sounds like the word for "watching" is *shoqedh* (dñéqOv).

Here God uses a pun to make a point!

(I know some people who don't need to hear that--

it will only encourage them!)

You see, the almond tree is the earliest plant to signal the inevitable coming of spring.
I remember being in Israel in late January

and seeing an almond tree already in bloom.

So the word of the Lord signals the inevitability of its fulfillment--

for though the Lord appears dormant at times in the flow of human history,
just like the dormant almond tree in the winter,
its early blossom is the sign that the Lord is always at work,
as an invisible guiding hand in the midst of all public life.

This **"watching"** of the Lord makes all human decisions in the governance of nations

merely provisional
and it destroys all human pretensions.

The Lord is always watching to bring about his desired end.

A second illustration further underlines this point--

v. 13-- **"The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?"**

"I see a pot that is boiling.

It is tilting toward us from the north," I answered.

**The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out
on all who live in the land.**

**I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms,"
declares the LORD.**

"Their kings will come and set up their thrones

**in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem;
they will come against all her surrounding walls and against all the towns of Judah."**

Notice, the devastation that is to come upon the people of God

is not simply allowed by the Lord,

he actually “**summons**” the nations to accomplish it.

The nations are at his bidding,

and by their actions he is working out his sovereign purposes in the world.

Empires rise and empires fall,

nations come and nations go--

kings ascend to power and are then forced to step down,

but the Lord is establishing a kingdom that will never fade,

and he has already crowned a king who will never be deposed.

And one day that hidden king will come in glory--

to receive the recognition and adoration that is his due--

Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

The coming of his Messiah in glory will be God’s final word to the nations.

But until then, his word reminds us

that he is watching, he is summoning--

and even now the nations will accomplish his purposes

in the unfolding of human history.

So whether it be Donald Trump or Joe Biden,

Vladimir Putin or Kim Jong-un--

they all have their parts to play,

but the Lord God is still the author of the story of human history.

And we must maintain our supreme loyalty to him until that day

when he makes that clear to all. //

We worship a God who speaks--

Sure, the starry heavens and the mighty mountains declare his majesty--

but he speaks even more clearly than that.

He speaks in such a way as to reveal something of his purpose for us,

something of his demands upon us,

and supremely he speaks in such a way as to reveal something of his love toward us.

The cosmos is not silent--

we are not left to wonder how we fit into the vast expanse of space and time

into which we seem to be thrown,

like shipwrecked sailors adrift in the midst of the endless sea.

It is God's word that sets our bearings;

It is God's word that helps us find a home;

it is God's word to us that assures us that we are not alone,

that God is with us to rescue us.

The Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah.

We need to hear that word.

For that word will inevitably point to another word—

God's final word.

The word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

In the opening words of the New Testament Book of Hebrews we read this:

**“In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets
at many times and in various ways,
but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,”**

God has spoken by his Son!

This is God’s supreme word to us--

in Christ we discover what we were made for.

In Christ, God constitutes his own people,

and in Christ we see the king of all kings and the Lord of all lords.

And through the Son

God still speaks--

What did Jesus say?

John 10--"I am the good shepherd;

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me,

for I call them by name.

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish;”

(John 10:14,27,28)

In Jesus Christ, God has spoken--

and in Jesus Christ, he speaks still today—calling his sheep by name. /

God is speaking--

Have you heard his voice?

What does he want to say to you this morning?

Some may need to hear his voice for the very first time.

You need to make contact with your Creator—
the God of heaven and earth.

Maybe you simply need to hear him say,

"I love you. You are my beloved son or daughter."

Maybe you need to hear him say, "I'm with you"--

whatever you're going through in your life right now--"I'm with you."

Maybe you've got some decision to make,

maybe you've got some relationship that's not right,

Maybe there's some area of your life

that you're trying to hide from God--

and he wants to talk you about that.

Maybe there's somebody around you that he wants to talk to through you.

We must to listen to the voice of the God who speaks.

And then we must respond to it in faith and obedience.

I ask you, What is the alternative?

Where else can you go?

Who else has words of eternal life?

Prayer

How Firm Foundation

Rom. 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us,
so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures
we might have hope.

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement
give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus,
so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify
the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Judgment and Promise:

God Speaks through the Prophet Jeremiah

Jan. 17, 2021

"The God Who Speaks

Jer. 1

As we begin our study of the prophet Jeremiah we see that the central character in his book is really the God who speaks.

It is "the word of the Lord" that gives meaning to--

I. An Individual Life--

God's call to Jeremiah (v.5)

II. The People of God--

God's message to Israel (v.10)

III. The Nations of the World--

God's sovereign rule of the nations (v.15)

God has spoken—

Supremely in his Son.

Will you believe what he has said?

Sermon Discussion:

"The God Who Speaks

Jer. 1

- Why is it reasonable to believe that the God who created us is able to speak to us?
What difference would it make in your life if God is, and always has been, silent?
- Read Jer. 1:4,5. How does this compare to what Paul says in Eph. 1:1-14? How does this word of God affect your understanding of yourself?
- Read Jer. 1:9,10. How does God's word relate to the uprooting and reconstruction of nations?
- Read Jer. 1:14-16. How do these words of God give meaning to the experience of Israel? How do they relate to our lives?
- Does God speak to you? How does he speak? What does he want you to hear? What does he want you to do?
- How has God spoken in Jesus Christ?