



# International Bible Lessons Commentary

Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

## Jeremiah 1:4-10 English Standard Version July 16, 2017

The [International Bible Lesson](#) (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, July 16, 2017**, is from **Jeremiah 1:4-10**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the [International Bible Lessons Commentary](#) website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Lesson Forum](#).

**(Jeremiah 1:4) Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,**

Jeremiah preached forty years beginning in the thirteenth year of King Josiah (640-609 BC) and after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC (probably until 580 BC). Jeremiah was taken to Egypt against his will where he died. "The word of the LORD" means God spoke directly to Jeremiah, and he recorded God's words to him through the scribe Baruch, who wrote them on a scroll (Jeremiah 36:4).

**(Jeremiah 1:5) "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."**

God saw the apostasy of the Kingdom of Judah before He planned the birth of Jeremiah, and God knew the kingdom would not repent and return to obedience in response to King Josiah's reforms or Jeremiah's preaching. God created Jeremiah in the womb to be His prophet, and before Jeremiah was born God consecrated and appointed him to His service. Similar to Samuel and John the Baptist. God created Jeremiah to speak His words to His rebellious people and to the nations around them. History shows that God fulfilled all His words through Jeremiah and God's words can be trusted.

**(Jeremiah 1:6) Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."**

Similar to Moses, Jeremiah told God with solemn humility that he was not good at public speaking; furthermore, he was too young or too inexperienced to represent God,

and probably knew that people would not listen to him because he was so young. He thought no king or subject in the kingdom would heed his words or believe that God would speak through someone so young. He did acknowledge that God was his sovereign ruler, and he recognized God's right to rule over him and all the nations of the earth. Jeremiah did not tell God "No," but he thought he gave God good and reasonable excuses not to be a prophet at his young age. As his Sovereign LORD, Jeremiah acknowledged that he would do whatever God wanted him to do at whatever age.

**(Jeremiah 1:7) But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.**

God needed a young man who would have the strength to confront anyone high or low, and God would increase Jeremiah's strength whenever needed. God also needed a young man who would preach effectively for at least forty years to Israel and the surrounding nations. Moreover, God had created Jeremiah to begin serving Him as a prophet when he was a young man. Jeremiah must go wherever God sent him and say whatever God commanded, and God wanted Jeremiah to begin as a young man. If Jeremiah preached what God commanded, he would not need to be an eloquent orator, and the repentance of the people did not depend upon Jeremiah being an eloquent speaker or upon his age.

**(Jeremiah 1:8) Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."**

As a young man, Jeremiah was probably terrified to think of speaking to the King and nobles of Judah, but God began by sending Jeremiah to a good and godly king, King Josiah, and Jeremiah publicly supported King Josiah's reforms. As Jeremiah gained confidence and experience, he courageously declared words of warning to all the corrupt kings and priests before and after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC. No matter how young or how old, or how well or how poorly Jeremiah could speak, God promised to be with him and enable him to do whatever He asked Jeremiah to do. Jeremiah was persecuted and imprisoned for his preaching, but God always rescued him until his work was done.

**(Jeremiah 1:9) Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.**

Jeremiah did not describe his vision of the LORD as Isaiah did. Isaiah saw God high and lifted up, and Isaiah's mouth was touched with a fiery coal by an angel to purify his lips. The LORD reached out his hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth. God made clear to Jeremiah (and from his words, Jeremiah's listeners should have believed) that He had put His words in Jeremiah's mouth. Jeremiah was not preaching his political and religious conclusions based upon his observations and study; rather, he was preaching

and would have Baruch record for others and us the very words of God.

**(Jeremiah 1:10) See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”**

As God’s ambassador and prophet, Jeremiah represented God before the people and the kings and rulers of the nations. What Jeremiah foretold was what God planned to do because of the idolatry and evil ways of his people and the nations surrounding them. God would do what Jeremiah said, and Jeremiah declared what God would do in judgment against Judah, Jerusalem, and the nations. God fulfilled Jeremiah’s words through the Babylonians when they destroyed the temple and the city of Jerusalem as he foretold and warned. Most of Jeremiah’s preaching would be words of judgment and warning (plucking up and breaking down), but Jeremiah also foretold that the Judean exiles would return from Babylon, and they would rebuild their city and temple (to build and to plant): see Jeremiah 25:12 and 29:10. Moreover, he foretold that God would make a new covenant with His people, which Jesus fulfilled when He came and made a new covenant in His blood about 500 years later: see Jeremiah 31:31.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Give some reasons why people can trust the Book of Jeremiah to be true.
2. Knowing the nation would not repent, give some reasons why you think God sent Jeremiah to preach in Jerusalem.
3. What are some ways Jeremiah and John the Baptist are similar and/or different?
4. What did God command Jeremiah to do?
5. What are some of the ways Jeremiah’s prophecies were fulfilled?

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Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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