

Jeremiah 1:1–10 — Called, Commanded, and Accompanied by God

Passage

Core text: Jeremiah 1:1–10.

The passage has two movements. Verses 1–3 provide the book’s superscription, locating Jeremiah in a priestly family at Anathoth and dating his ministry from Josiah’s thirteenth year through Jerusalem’s exile under Zedekiah. Verses 4–10 recount Jeremiah’s call and commission: God’s prior knowledge and appointment (v. 5), Jeremiah’s protest (v. 6), God’s commands and promise (vv. 7–8), the symbolic touch and gift of divine words (v. 9), and the prophet’s two-sided mission of judgment and restoration (v. 10).^{[1][2]}

Genre: Verses 1–3 are a prophetic superscription; verses 4–10 are a prophetic call narrative. The call shares recognizable features with Moses, Isaiah, and Ezekiel: divine initiative, human inadequacy, divine reassurance, and authorization to speak God’s words (Exod. 3–4; Deut. 18:18; Isa. 6; Ezek. 1–3).^{[3][4][^5]}

Speaker and audience: In verses 4–10 Jeremiah narrates in the first person while reporting the LORD’s speech. The immediate commission concerns Jeremiah personally, but his message addresses Judah and Jerusalem and ultimately “nations and kingdoms”; the book later includes extended oracles concerning foreign nations (Jer. 25:15–29; 46–51).^{[2][6][^7]}

Preaching safeguard: This is first a record of Jeremiah’s unique prophetic commission, not a generic promise that every Christian has Jeremiah’s office, authority, or individually revealed prenatal career plan.

Big picture

Jeremiah 1:1–10 establishes why the rest of the book must be heard: Jeremiah speaks because the LORD knew, set apart, sent, commanded, accompanied, and authorized him. The passage shifts attention away from the prophet’s natural credentials and toward the God whose word creates the messenger’s vocation and determines his message.^{[1][2]}

The central tension is not **capable person versus difficult task**, but **reluctant servant versus sufficient God**. God does not answer Jeremiah’s objection by praising his latent talent; he redirects him to obedient going, faithful speaking, divine presence, and promised rescue (vv. 7–9).^[^2]

The commission is severe but not hopeless. Four destructive verbs—uproot, tear down, destroy, overthrow—precede two constructive verbs—build and plant; this pattern becomes programmatic for the book’s movement through judgment toward restoration and the new covenant (Jer. 18:7–10; 31:27–34).^{[8][9][^2]}

Literary context

Jeremiah 1 functions as an overture to the whole book. Verses 1–3 look forward to Jerusalem’s exile, so readers know at the outset where Judah’s covenant rebellion will lead; verses 4–10 explain the authority and shape of the prophetic ministry that interprets that catastrophe.^[3]^[1]

The chapter continues beyond the preaching unit with two visions: the almond branch (1:11–12), signifying that God is watching over his word to perform it, and the boiling pot from the north (1:13–16), anticipating judgment. The concluding charge (1:17–19) intensifies the commands not to fear and promises that opponents will fight Jeremiah but not finally overcome him because the LORD is with him.^[^3]

Within the full book, 1:10 supplies a recurring vocabulary. The language of uprooting, demolishing, building, and planting reappears in Jeremiah 18:7–10, 31:28, and 45:4, connecting Jeremiah’s preaching both to Jerusalem’s fall and to God’s work of reconstituting his covenant people.^[7]^[10]^[^8]

Flow of thought

- **1:1–3 — The messenger in history:** Jeremiah’s ancestry, hometown, kings, and ministry horizon.
- **1:4–5 — The call begins with God:** God forms, knows, consecrates, and appoints.
- **1:6 — The servant protests:** Jeremiah cites inability to speak and youth.
- **1:7–8 — God replaces excuse with command and promise:** Go, speak, do not fear; “I am with you.”
- **1:9 — God supplies the message:** The touched mouth dramatizes divine authorization.
- **1:10 — God defines the mission:** Jeremiah announces God’s judgment and restoration among nations and kingdoms.

Exegetical insights

Verses 1–3: A word in history

- **“The words of Jeremiah”** serves as the book’s title and may encompass both prophetic messages and narrative material about Jeremiah. Yet verse 2 immediately insists that behind Jeremiah’s words stands “the word of the LORD”; the human prophet is real, situated, and personal, but his authority is derivative.^[^3]
- **“Son of Hilkiah, one of the priests.”** Jeremiah came from a priestly setting, though the text does not say that he served as a priest. The attached commentary cautions against identifying his father with the high priest Hilkiah of 2 Kings 22.^[11]^[1]
- **“Anathoth in the land of Benjamin.”** Anathoth was a priestly town near Jerusalem (Josh. 21:17–18). Jeremiah is therefore both geographically close to Jerusalem and, as a Benjaminite village priest’s son, not simply a product of the Jerusalem establishment he will confront.^[12]^[11]

- **The reigns frame the ministry.** The superscription begins in Josiah's thirteenth year, normally dated about 627 BC, and extends through Jerusalem's exile in Zedekiah's eleventh year, 587/586 BC. The omission of the short reigns of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin does not imply inactivity; the heading names the principal periods rather than every king.^{[13][14]}
[¹⁵]

Verses 4–5: Divine initiative

- **“The word of the LORD came to me.”** The call originates outside Jeremiah. His ministry is not self-authorization, political ambition, or personal branding; it begins with revelation received.^{[16][2]}
- **“Before I formed you.”** The forming verb evokes God as purposeful maker and anticipates the potter imagery in Jeremiah 18. The stress is on God's initiative: Jeremiah's life and prophetic vocation are not accidents.^{[8][1]}
- **“I knew you.”** In context, “knew” is more than awareness of facts. Parallel phrases —“consecrated” and “appointed”—support the sense of relational choice for a divinely given role.^{[17][2]}
- **“Consecrated you.”** God set Jeremiah apart for sacred service. The verse concerns Jeremiah's prenatal election to prophetic ministry; it should not be flattened into “God has a similarly specific revealed job for everyone.” It contributes to a biblical theology of God's purposeful care for life in the womb, but its primary subject is prophetic vocation, so it should not bear an entire bioethical argument by itself.^{[17][2]}
- **“Prophet to the nations.”** Jeremiah's primary ministry occurs among Judah, but his authority is not bounded by Judah because the LORD rules every nation. The phrase anticipates both the cup-of-wrath commission in chapter 25 and the foreign-nation oracles in chapters 46–51.^{[6][7]}

Verse 6: Honest inadequacy

- **“Ah, Lord GOD.”** Jeremiah responds with alarm rather than eager self-confidence.
- **“I do not know how to speak.”** This echoes Moses' objection in Exodus 4:10. It need not mean a clinical speech defect; it expresses felt inadequacy for authoritative public speech.
^{[16][1]}
- **“I am only a youth.”** The Hebrew term can cover a range from child to young man, so Jeremiah's exact age cannot be established from this word alone. An age under twenty is possible, but estimates such as “about twenty” should be presented as inference rather than textual fact.
[¹]
- Jeremiah's humility is not condemned, but his self-description cannot be allowed to become disobedience. A legitimate sense of weakness becomes illegitimate when it contradicts God's command and promise.

Verses 7–8: Command and presence

- God directly counters Jeremiah's refrain: **"Do not say, 'I am only a youth.'"** The decisive facts are not Jeremiah's age and eloquence but God's sending and commanding.
- Two comprehensive expressions define prophetic obedience: **go to everyone** God sends him to and **speak everything** God commands. Jeremiah receives neither control over the audience nor editorial control over the message.^[^2]
- **"Do not be afraid of them."** The likely fear is social and physical opposition, not merely stage fright. The rest of the chapter names kings, officials, priests, and people as opponents (1:18), and the book records rejection, threats, confinement, and violence.^{[4][11]}
- **"I am with you to deliver you."** Divine presence is the ground of courage. "Deliver" does not promise exemption from suffering; Jeremiah will suffer extensively. It promises that hostility will not cancel God's mission or finally defeat God's purpose for his servant.^{[4][3]}

Verses 9–10: Word and commission

- **The touched mouth** is a commissioning sign. It parallels the purification of Isaiah's lips (Isa. 6:6–7), God's promise to put words in the prophet's mouth (Deut. 18:18), and Ezekiel's reception of the scroll (Ezek. 2:8–3:3). The sign emphasizes the divine origin of Jeremiah's message, not magical power in the prophet's body.^{[18][19][^3]}
- **"I have put my words in your mouth."** Jeremiah's authority resides in God's word, not personality, platform, office, or rhetorical polish. This also places a severe limit on contemporary application: preachers stand under the written Word and must not transfer Jeremiah's direct revelatory authority to their own impressions.^[^2]
- **"I appoint you over nations and kingdoms."** Jeremiah is not installed as a political sovereign. He receives authority to announce what the sovereign LORD will do; the prophetic word pronounces judgment and restoration that God himself brings about.^[^2]
- **Six infinitives define the mission.** The four verbs of demolition and two of construction show that judgment occupies substantial space in Jeremiah, but restoration is God's intended horizon. The order matters: entrenched idolatry and covenant falsehood cannot simply be decorated; God exposes and removes before rebuilding.^{[10][9][^1]}
- The ratio of four negative verbs to two positive verbs should not be turned into a mathematical rule for preaching. It is a literary emphasis suited to Jeremiah's historical commission.

Interpretive cautions

- **Jeremiah's call and every believer's call:** The passage reveals transferable truths about God's sovereignty, presence, and provision, but Jeremiah's prophetic office is unique. Christian vocation should be taught from the whole canon, including ordinary faithfulness, Spirit-given service, wisdom, church discernment, and providence—not from Jeremiah 1:5 alone.
- **Fear and deliverance:** The promise is not that obedience feels safe or prevents trauma. Jeremiah's life rules out a prosperity reading; God's presence sustains him through costly

obedience.^{[11][4]}

- **Authority “over nations”:** The authority belongs to the divine word Jeremiah announces, not to the prophet as an autonomous revolutionary or ruler.^[^2]
- **Composition questions:** Some scholars regard parts of Jeremiah 1 as later editorial framing, while others read the chapter as a coherent call account. The sermon can acknowledge that discussion without making it central; the received form plainly functions as the book’s theological introduction.^{[20][1]}

Biblical-theological links

Creation and vocation

Genesis 2:7 and Jeremiah 18:1–6 portray God as one who forms human life as a potter forms clay. Jeremiah 1 applies that Creator-creature relationship specifically to the prophet: the One who formed him has rightful authority to appoint and send him.^{[8][1]}

Psalms 139:13–16 provides a broader canonical parallel concerning God’s intimate knowledge and formation of human life in the womb. Isaiah 49:1, 5 and Galatians 1:15 likewise connect prenatal divine purpose with a particular redemptive-historical vocation—the Servant’s mission and Paul’s apostolic calling—not a promise of prophetic office to all.^[^21]

Prophets like Moses

Jeremiah’s reluctance, God’s sending, the command to speak what God commands, and the placing of words in his mouth recall Moses (Exod. 3:10–12; 4:10–16) and Deuteronomy 18:18. This presents Jeremiah in a Mosaic prophetic pattern: his credibility depends on speaking God’s words faithfully rather than satisfying the expectations of rulers or crowds.^{[19][3]}

Isaiah 6:1–8 and Ezekiel 2:8–3:3 add complementary pictures. Isaiah’s unclean lips are purified, Ezekiel consumes the scroll, and Jeremiah’s mouth is touched; in each case, God makes the messenger fit to carry a message that originates with God.^{[22][18]}

Judgment and new covenant

The six verbs of Jeremiah 1:10 become a map for the book. Judah is uprooted and torn down through Babylon’s conquest and exile, yet God also promises to build and plant a restored people (Jer. 24:6; 29:5; 31:27–28), climaxing in the promise of a new covenant written on the heart (31:31–34).^{[9][10]}

Jeremiah 18:7–10 also shows that prophetic announcements engage morally responsible hearers: God speaks of relenting from announced disaster when a nation turns from evil and withholding announced good when it persists in disobedience. This guards against reading 1:10 as fatalism or impersonal historical determinism.^{[23][8]}

Christ and the gospel

A responsible Christological connection proceeds by **prophetic pattern and redemptive fulfillment**, not by treating Jeremiah as a direct prediction of Jesus. Jeremiah is a sent prophet bearing God's words, rejected by many of his own people and persevering through suffering; Jesus is the greater and final revealer who not only speaks God's words but uniquely makes the Father known (Deut. 18:15–19; John 1:14–18; Heb. 1:1–3).

Jeremiah announces the judgment-restoration movement that culminates in the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34). At the Last Supper Jesus identifies his sacrificial death with “the new covenant” (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25), so the gospel answers the problem Jeremiah exposes: sinful hearts require more than cosmetic reform; they require forgiveness and inward renewal.

The gospel also keeps application from becoming “be brave like Jeremiah.” Christian courage rests finally in the presence of the risen Christ—“I am with you always” (Matt. 28:20)—and the Spirit's empowering witness (Acts 1:8), while the church's authority remains ministerial and Word-bound rather than identical to Jeremiah's prophetic inspiration.

Historical/cultural background

Firmly grounded

- Jeremiah's ministry began in Josiah's thirteenth year, approximately 627 BC, and continued through the fall and exile of Jerusalem in 587/586 BC. He therefore served through roughly four decades of political upheaval.^{[14][15][^13]}
- Josiah's reform followed the discovery of the Book of the Law in 622 BC (2 Kings 22–23), but Josiah died at Megiddo in 609 BC. Judah then lived under competing Egyptian and Babylonian pressure.^{[15][14]}
- Babylon defeated Egypt at Carchemish in 605 BC, deported Jerusalem's king and leading citizens in 597 BC, and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple after Zedekiah's rebellion in 587/586 BC.^{[13][15][^11]}
- Anathoth was a priestly settlement in Benjamin only a few miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jeremiah's local roots matter because even people from his hometown later opposed his ministry (Jer. 11:18–23).^{[12][11]}

Possible, not certain

- Jeremiah may have been connected to Abiathar's priestly line because Solomon banished Abiathar to Anathoth (1 Kings 2:26–27), but Jeremiah 1 does not state this genealogy. Present it, if at all, as a possibility.^[^1]
- Jeremiah's exact age at his call is uncertain. “Youth” supports relative inexperience, but claims that he was a teenager or exactly twenty go beyond the text.^[^1]
- The precise relationship between Jeremiah's earliest preaching and Josiah's reform remains debated. The book dates his call before the reform's major phase but gives limited explicit information about his activity under Josiah.^[^20]

Theological themes

- **God:** God is the sovereign Creator who knows and appoints, the speaking Lord who reveals, the sending King who rules nations, the present Deliverer who sustains servants, and the holy Judge who also builds and plants.^{[8][2]}
- **Revelation:** God's word precedes and governs the messenger. Authentic ministry does not create a message to gain relevance; it receives and faithfully communicates what God has spoken.
- **Humanity:** Human life is formed by God and lived under his claim. Creaturely limitation is real, but it does not overrule divine command or make obedience unnecessary.
- **Sin:** Judah's condition requires uprooting and demolition, not affirmation or surface adjustment. Sin is personal and covenantal, but it also becomes institutional and cultural in nations and kingdoms.
- **Judgment:** God's judgment is morally serious and historically active. Yet Jeremiah 18 shows that warnings function as calls to repentance rather than invitations to fatalistic resignation.^{[23][8]}
- **Grace and hope:** "Build" and "plant" prevent judgment from being the final word. God's restorative purpose ultimately opens into return, heart renewal, forgiveness, and the new covenant (Jer. 31:27–34).^[^9]
- **Calling:** Divine calling is grounded in God's initiative, but it produces concrete obedience—going where sent and saying what is commanded. Calling is neither self-expression nor a guarantee of visible success.
- **Courage:** Biblical courage is not a fearless temperament. It is obedience made possible by the promise, "I am with you," even when fear and opposition remain.^{[4][2]}
- **Church and ministry:** The church must distinguish Jeremiah's inspired prophetic office from contemporary pastoral ministry. Still, pastors analogically share the duty to proclaim the canonical Word fully—judgment and grace, repentance and restoration—without editing it to satisfy the age.

Sermon big idea options

1. God's call rests not on our adequacy but on his sovereign purpose, authoritative Word, and sustaining presence.
2. When God sends his servants into fearful places, he supplies the message and accompanies the messenger.
3. God's Word tears down the lies that destroy us so that God may build and plant a restored people.
4. The God who knew Jeremiah before his birth remained with him through costly obedience and used his Word to address nations.

Fallen condition focus

Because people measure obedience by their perceived competence, social safety, and likely success, they excuse themselves from costly faithfulness and substitute self-protection or self-authored messages for trust in God's Word and presence.

Proposition

God equips those he sends by giving them his Word and his presence, so they can obey him courageously even when they feel inadequate and face opposition.

Aim

Call hearers to relinquish excuses, submit to what God has spoken, and take the next faithful step with confidence in God's presence—while directing unbelievers beyond inspirational “purpose” language to the God whose Word exposes sin and promises new-covenant mercy in Christ.

Outline possibilities

Outline A: The God behind the call

1. God appoints before Jeremiah feels ready (vv. 1–6)

- Jeremiah is located in real history, not mythic abstraction.
- God's prior purpose precedes Jeremiah's awareness or achievement.
- Jeremiah's inadequacy is honest but not decisive.

2. God commands where Jeremiah feels afraid (vv. 7–8)

- Go where God sends.
- Say what God commands.
- Refuse to let fear have final authority because God is present.

3. God supplies what Jeremiah cannot produce (vv. 9–10)

- God puts his words in the prophet's mouth.
- The Word confronts and demolishes.
- The Word also rebuilds and plants hope.

Outline B: Three replacements

1. God's purpose replaces self-definition (vv. 4–5)

2. God's presence replaces self-protection (vv. 6–8)

3. God's Word replaces self-expression (vv. 9–10)

This outline can connect naturally with hearers shaped by personal branding, anxiety, and the pressure to invent a meaningful identity.

Outline C: “But I...” / “But God...”

1. “But I am too young” — the limits we see (v. 6)
2. “But go...speak...do not fear” — the obedience God commands (vv. 7–8a)
3. “For I am with you” — the presence God promises (v. 8b)
4. “I have put my words in your mouth” — the provision God gives (vv. 9–10)

Outline D: The ministry of the Word

1. Its source: God speaks (vv. 4–5)
2. Its servant: weak but sent (vv. 6–8)
3. Its substance: God’s own words (v. 9)
4. Its effect: judgment and restoration (v. 10)

Application avenues

Believers

- Name the difference between humility and unbelief: “I am weak” may be true; “therefore God cannot use ordinary obedience” does not follow.
- Identify the next commanded act rather than waiting to feel impressive—tell the truth, reconcile, serve, disciple, confess, speak of Christ, or endure faithfully.
- Ground courage in God’s presence rather than predicted outcomes. Jeremiah’s ministry warns against equating faithfulness with applause, numerical growth, or immediate results.

Unbelievers

- Invite examination of Jeremiah’s claim rather than asking for vague admiration of his courage: if the living God speaks, autonomy is not neutral and reality includes moral accountability.
- Clarify that Christianity offers more than a therapeutic message that everyone is special. The text confronts hearers with a God who forms, knows, commands, judges, and restores.
- Present the judgment-to-restoration movement as a route to the gospel: God’s Word dismantles false refuges, but God promises forgiveness and transformed hearts through the new covenant fulfilled in Christ.

The church

- Ask whether ministry is shaped more by “What will work?” than “What has God said?” Strategy has a proper place, but it must remain the servant of Scripture.
- Preach both halves of the commission: do not offer restoration without repentance or demolition without hope.
- Develop younger leaders without patronizing them, while also refusing to confuse youthful confidence with divine authority. Character, doctrine, gifting, and church confirmation still matter.

Families

- Parents should resist interpreting every weakness or chaotic season as spiritual failure. Faithfulness may consist of small, repeated acts under God’s presence rather than an idealized routine.
- Children should not bear the burden of fulfilling a parent’s imagined “Jeremiah 1:5 destiny.” Parents can nurture gifts and obedience while leaving vocational specifics to providence, wisdom, and maturing discernment.
- Families can practice media discernment by asking, “What word is shaping our fears—God’s revealed Word or an algorithm designed to keep our attention?”

Broader culture

- Jeremiah challenges both expressive individualism (“I define myself”) and technocratic confidence (“competence can solve the deepest human problem”). Identity and renewal begin with God’s claim and Word.
- The authority over “nations and kingdoms” confronts political idolatry: rulers remain accountable to God. Yet the text does not authorize the church to seize Jeremiah’s prophetic office or treat partisan instinct as revelation.
- Public truth-telling must include constructive hope. Faithful critique asks not only what must be uprooted but also what should be built and planted in keeping with justice, truth, neighbor-love, and the gospel.

Illustration directions

- **Demolition before rebuilding:** A contractor cannot safely renovate a structure while leaving rot, mold, or a failed foundation untouched. Verify any technical details locally; use the image rather than an invented incident.
- **Ambassador, not author:** An ambassador’s authority lies in faithfully conveying the sender’s message, not improvising national policy. The analogy clarifies delegated prophetic authority while recognizing that modern ambassadors are imperfect parallels.
- **A child’s limited sight with a parent present:** The point is not that danger is imaginary, but that trusted presence changes how danger is faced. Avoid sentimental claims that presence prevents pain.

- **Algorithmic formation:** A phone feed constantly supplies words that name threats and define adequacy. Contrast its commercially curated voice with sustained attentiveness to Scripture, without pretending technology itself is uniquely sinful.

Listener questions

Reality Respector Ryan

1. How do we know Jeremiah actually received a word from God rather than interpreting an intense inner experience as divine?
2. Is “God knew you before birth” evidence for Christianity, or does it merely assume the worldview the sermon is trying to prove?
3. Why should God have the right to appoint someone’s life without first obtaining that person’s consent?
4. When the text speaks of destroying and overthrowing nations, how is that morally different from religiously justified authoritarianism?
5. If Christianity respects reality, what publicly accessible reasons are there to trust Jeremiah’s message—and ultimately Jesus—rather than another religion’s exclusive claims?

Pastoral opportunity: Take the epistemic questions seriously. Show that the passage itself does not ask hearers to trust charisma alone; Jeremiah’s long ministry, costly opposition, covenant continuity, fulfilled judgment, and canonical place all matter, while the ultimate Christian claim rests on Christ’s identity, death, and resurrection rather than on a generalized feeling of purpose.

Anxious Ally

1. Does my inability to maintain an ideal devotional routine mean I am resisting God’s call or failing my children?
2. How can I tell the difference between the Holy Spirit’s conviction and the constant accusation I feel after watching parenting content online?
3. What does “I am with you” mean when I still feel anxious, exhausted, and spiritually distracted?
4. What is one small act of obedience this passage invites from me in this demanding season?
5. How can God’s Word uproot fear without turning Bible reading into one more task at which I might fail?

Pastoral opportunity: Emphasize presence before performance and concrete obedience rather than an aspirational spiritual lifestyle. Avoid implying that anxiety disappears if she believes harder; encourage wise pastoral, medical, or professional care when anxiety becomes persistent or impairing.

Motivated Marvin

1. How can I discern where God wants me to invest the next season without claiming a Jeremiah-like private revelation?
2. Which younger believers should I intentionally encourage, train, and release rather than merely advise?
3. What comfortable patterns in my life need to be uprooted before something more fruitful can be planted?
4. Am I measuring kingdom impact by visible scale, or by faithful obedience to God's Word over time?
5. How can I use my experience and resources without making ministry depend on my control, reputation, or preferred methods?

Pastoral opportunity: Channel his motivation toward durable, relational investment—discipleship, generosity, leadership development, prayer, and faithful service—while guarding him from a late-life “legacy project” centered more on self-importance than love.

Questions requiring further study

- What translation will govern the sermon, and how will it render the key terms in verses 5–6 and the six verbs in verse 10?
- How much of Jeremiah 1:11–19 should be read or summarized so the congregation hears the full warning of opposition and the repeated promise of God's presence?
- How will the sermon distinguish Jeremiah's unique prophetic commission from ordinary Christian vocation without making the text feel remote?
- Should the sermon explicitly address prenatal life? If so, how can that implication be stated carefully while preserving the verse's primary focus on Jeremiah's prophetic election?
- What evidence for Jeremiah's prophetic credibility should be offered for skeptical hearers without overloading this sermon with a full doctrine of revelation or canon?
- How will “deliverance” be explained so hearers do not infer immunity from suffering, especially given Jeremiah's later persecution and lament?
- Which dimension most needs emphasis in this congregation: divine purpose, human inadequacy, fear of people, authority of Scripture, judgment, or restorative hope?
- How will the sermon reach Christ through the new-covenant trajectory rather than by a superficial “Jeremiah was like Jesus” comparison?
- What specific “next act of obedience” can be named for hearers in different seasons without claiming direct knowledge of God's individual plan for them?
- Would a companion text such as Exodus 4:10–12, Jeremiah 31:27–34, 2 Corinthians 4:5–12, or Matthew 28:18–20 sharpen the sermon's chosen emphasis?

Source note

The attached *New American Commentary* excerpt was used as a conservative evangelical commentary and as the principal source for verse-level lexical and structural observations. Scripture text and translation notes were checked against NET and ESV resources, especially for “knew,” “put my words in your mouth,” and the nature of Jeremiah’s authority. Historical claims were cross-checked with reference overviews and scholarly treatments; where reconstructions remain debated—such as Jeremiah’s precise age, ancestry, early relationship to Josiah’s reform, or the compositional history of chapter 1—the report labels them as uncertain.^{[14][7][11][20][3][1][^2]}

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