

"One of the world's worst jobs"

Jeremiah 1:4-10

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"7 But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am too young." You must go to everyone I send you and say whatever I command you.

8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, declares the LORD.'

"9 Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.'"

When you think of the worst job ever, what comes to your mind?

What would be your least favorite task?

Today we look at a fellow whose job description would turn off 99.99% of us.

If you go on-line and ask re: the world's worst jobs, you get some intriguing data. **Not all info is what we like to discuss in polite company as we have here today.**

To pay for college, I worked in service stations fulltime for a while.

Cleaning restrooms was my least favorite work assignment.

For an interim, I worked in a large "5 & 10 cent store," as folks called them.

My tasks included cleaning the employees' restrooms.

Day after day, the women's room was messier than the men's.

I have never seen statistics on the subject; I can relate only my experience.

Jeremiah's job was clearly worse than cleaning the women's room at the S.H. Kress Company Store in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, 1955-1956.

One of the world's worst jobs is not our only topic today.

Suppose a panel of experts promised to solve a great mystery for you.

This panel delivers an extended, serious, detailed explanation.

Imagine that after you hear many specialists' accounts of the mystery, you learn that they are wrong.

Our text leads us to a similar circumstance.

So we have one of the world's least desirable jobs and a topic on which experts routinely give you wrong information.

But these two issues are not all: our text evokes a puzzle:

"The word of the LORD came to me (Jeremiah), saying, (5) '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.'"

The word "know" begs for attention.

The Bible uses the word (yada), which is translated "know" in many different ways.

"Know" applies to God knowing things.

When Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, he promised the couple they would be like God **"knowing"** good and evil.¹ "Know" is in verse 3:7 when Adam and Eve knew-realized that they had no clothes.

The word "know" is used another way.

Many translations of Genesis 4:1 read that Adam **"knew" Eve and she conceived and gave birth to Cain.²**

The same Hebrew word appears in Genesis 3:5, 7; 4:1; and in Jeremiah 1:5.

- **What does our text mean when it states that God **"knew"** Jeremiah before he was born?**
- **How can that same word be used for having sex and at the same time for knowing God and for God knowing us?**
- **How is it possible to have the same word describe a couple having sex and also for us know God and for God to know us?**

Here is how I understand it.

¹ Genesis 3:5 (twice) & 3:7 See attached **My Notes** for examples.

² "And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived" KJV

"Adam made love to his wife Eve.. ." current NIV translates (Hebrew - ידע)

When folks talk about what happened between Adam and Eve, they place great emphasis on the “sex” part and little on the “knowing” part.

Here’s what I mean.

Adam and Eve had been only recently created.

- **Neither Adam nor Eve had sex education in school.**
 - No parents to tell them about the birds and the bees.
 - No videos movies or books.

Imagine two innocent creatures with basic similarities in their anatomy.

Yet also major differences.

It is reasonable that they would spend time becoming familiar with and exploring those differences—getting to know each other.

We do not know what instruction the Lord might have given them.

They were new, inexperienced, and had no background in anything.

That exploring, examining, and comparing ended with consummation
The knowing probably had largely to do with becoming more and more familiar with each other’s bodies and minds.

Imagine how well your mother knew you.
God know us all infinitely better.

You and I both know it is time to move on to the next mystery in our text.

“Before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

The apostle Paul said something similar:

“But . . . God . . . set me apart from birth and called me by his grace . . .”³

Does God choose or elect certain people?

He chose Moses, Jeremiah, and Paul.

What did that “choosing” mean?

Did that mean that God pre-chose them for salvation?

As many religious leaders teach, did God select others not to be saved?

³ Galatians 1:15 NIV

That sort of thinking often leads to distorted behavior.

Most of us have read about John D. Rockefeller, one of the wealthiest men who ever lived.

Rockefeller started out in Cleveland.

Rockefeller and a few other men were involved in a failing oil business.

Rockefeller and his cronies refined kerosene that people used in those days for lighting.

Rockefeller and his associates were about to go belly-up.

Cornelius Vanderbilt owned the New York Central Railroad; he saw the potential in kerosene for his railroad to make money.

All over the country, people wanted kerosene for their lanterns and lights.

As people presently want up-to-date iPhones, everyone then wanted kerosene for light.

Vanderbilt's railroads would transport that kerosene in barrels on his trains.

Vanderbilt asked Rockefeller to ride one of his trains to New York so they could make a deal.

Rockefeller was supposed to catch a at 6:25 AM train in Cleveland.

Rockefeller was late that morning and missed the train.

That train derailed killing everyone aboard.

Rockefeller was a changed man.

But not for the better.

Rockefeller saw the event as a sign that no matter what he did, God was with him.

After all, hadn't God saved him-spared his life?

Rockefeller lost all of his scruples.

He became ruthless and crushed all his competition.

He eventually did in even Cornelius Vanderbilt.

What does it mean to have God choose you?

It does not mean God approves everything you do.

It means that God chose you to do an assignment for Him.

He has a job for you to do.

Recall what Paul said?

“But . . . God . . . set me apart from birth and called me by his grace.”

That did not mean that God had saved Paul forever and that he could not fall from grace.

It meant that God had a job for him.

He called Paul as the Apostle-to-be was hurrying down a road to destroy God's Church.

He told Paul to go into town and talk to a preacher about what he must do.

Here's what the Lord said to the preacher about Paul: "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel,"⁴

The Lord had an important job for Paul.

Yet Paul knew that just because God appeared to him and chose him, he wasn't forever saved.

“I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified.”⁵

⁴ See Acts 9, especially verse 15 NIV

⁵ 1 Corinthians 9:27 NRSV. See also Philipians 3:11-14.

Here's how Paul warned young Timothy:

“Watch your life and doctrine closely.

Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”⁶

In other words, God's choosing is for a particular task.

Saved people are in the process of becoming like Jesus.

Why so-called experts continue to misread what predestination is, I do not know.

Romans 8 explains predestination.

God predestined the kind of people he will save.

Imagine a coach explaining to prospective players, which ones will wear a uniform and play in the big game.

The coach tells the prospects:

“I have perfectly trained my son. In drills, practices, and commitment to the game plan, follow my son's lead. If you keep to my

⁶ 1 Timothy 4:16 NIV, see also Hebrews 2:1-4; 4:1-7, e.g.

son's example, you are destined to play in the big game wearing my team's uniform. You do not have to be perfect, but you must dedicate yourself to imitating my son!"

Isn't that what Paul wrote to Roman Christians:

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."⁷

By believing in and following Jesus, we find justification and eventual glory.

We can speak all we want on Sundays about being predestined and chosen, but if we are not conforming to Jesus' image, Mondays through Saturday night, we might be in for Judgment Day surprises.

Unless we faithfully follow Jesus, perform our chosen task, praise God, and persevere in love, our salvation is in jeopardy.

Everyone in the Kingdom has an assignment.

"What does God want me to do?" you ask.

If you are a father, a mother, a child, an employer or an employee, or a citizen, God has an assignment for you.

The Lord expects you to submit, act, behave, and to treat others a certain way.

To find out what God wants you to do, spend about fifteen minutes a day reading the New Testament.

Every Christian carries a responsibility.

Parents, children, employees, and employers especially should read Ephesians, Colossians, and the Thessalonian letters.

All of us should be reading the Gospels so we'll know what Jesus expects of us.

Every person who carries the name of Christ has a responsibility to share His word with others and warn them.

⁷ Romans 8:29, 30 NIV

You may be thinking:

"I'm not qualified to tell people about Jesus. That's a preacher's job."

Statistics prove that ministers aren't that important to church growth.

Almost 87% of people who attend church are there not because the minister brought them.

Most of us attend because a friend or relative brought us.

Preachers are responsible for about 10% or less.

Nobody believes or listens to them — that's why preaching is terrible job.

Few take them seriously.

Many on the outside see preachers as sales reps-little more than vacuum cleaner salesmen.

Or parsons trying to build a following.

But when friends and loved ones tell how Jesus has changed their lives and how they find encouragement in Christ's church, people are impressed.

It means a lot when we joyfully praise God and encourage people to attend with us.

God bless you as you conform to the image of Jesus and share the joy of the Lord with others.

God will be praised in more and more families and homes.

The attached pages are a handout that each member of the congregation received prior to the sermon on January 27, 2019. Those present are able to read each scripture as Bob references it.

For several weeks, he has prepared similar handouts for most of his sermons. We would like you opinion: Do you find these helpful? You may tell Bob by writing him at the address below.

My Notes

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Genesis 3:5-7

The serpent to Adam & Eve

"For God knows that when you eat from it your
eyes will be opened, and you will be like God,
knowing good and evil.' (6) When the woman saw
that the fruit of the tree was good for food and
pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining

wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave
some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate
it. (7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized (knew) they were naked; so they
sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for
themselves."

Genesis 4:1 NIV

Adam made love to (knew) his wife Eve, and she
became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said,
"With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a
man."

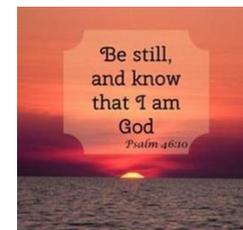
Genesis 4:1 KJV

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived"

"Know" and "knowing" in 3:5, "know" in
verse 7, and "knew" in 4:1 are all translations
of the same Hebrew word – יָדָע - pronounced
yadá

Paul in Galatians 1:15 NIV

"But . . . God . . . set me apart from birth
and called me by his grace . . ."



Acts 9:15 NIV

The Lord said to Ananias about Paul:

"This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel,"

1 Corinthians 9:27 NRSV.

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1 Timothy 4:16 NIV

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The percentage of people who attend church because friends or relatives have brought them _____

The percentage of people who attend because the minister invited them _____



"I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective *and* powerful because of your *accurate* knowledge of every good thing which is ours in Christ." Philemon 6



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