

August 3 Answers

- 1) Jeremiah was God's "prophet to the **nations**," and God told Jeremiah that he had appointed him before he was even **conceived** (Jer 1:5). This means that God thought about and planned for us long before we were **born**. When we're tempted to feel insignificant or inadequate, we should remember that God has a **purpose** for our lives, and God has always thought of us as **valuable**. Jeremiah was dismayed by God's call—surely he was too **young** to be a prophet! He didn't know how to speak, and he was afraid of proclaiming your message to "the nations." But God told him, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'...and...Do not be **afraid** of them, for I am **with** you to deliver you, declares the LORD" (Jer 1:7–8). The truth is, Jeremiah was probably right—he most likely was too young, and he certainly was afraid. But like Jeremiah, we need to learn to see our lives in terms of God's **presence**. Just as **Gideon** was told, "The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor," so Jeremiah was told, "You shall speak...for I am with you." This teaches us that God's presence is what really matters. God will give us the strength and **power** to obey his commands as long as our hearts are set to do His will. God promised to be with Jeremiah and take care of him, but God never promised to keep his life free from trouble. So it is with us. The storms of life will come, but God will protect us and keep us strong. Jeremiah was sent to the kingdom of Judah first, and he declared in the hearing of Jerusalem, "What wrong did your fathers find in me that they went far from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?" (Jer 2:5). From the time Israel entered Canaan until the present day, they had rebelled against God and worshipped other gods. "Therefore I still contend with you, declares the LORD, and with your children's children I will contend" (Jer 2:9). Jeremiah gave example after example of how shocking Israel's sin was, yet they refused to be ashamed. Instead, they brazenly said to God: "My Father, my friend from my youth, will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever?" This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can" (Jer 3:4–5 NIV). What is it that God wanted from His people? "Return, O Israel...break up your fallow ground...circumcise yourselves to the LORD; remove the foreskin of your hearts!" (Jer 4:1–4; Hos 10:12). More than anything, God wanted sincere repentance and loving obedience. May this always be true of us!