

*The Four Direct Relations*  
Jeremiah 1:1-19

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This passage demonstrates that there is a gulf between the consciences of man and God – one that is only bridged by revelation.

Chapter 1 puts into evidence 4 direct relations that serve as a frame for Jeremiah's understanding of his assigned task. At first, he didn't understand what he was supposed to do.

1. *The first direct relation is that of the word of God → the human mind and human behavior.* This is what obedience is. "Go wherever I tell you, say what I say." God uses the image of the almond tree to represent fruit reproduced from the Word of God to the mind and behavior of the prophet and his hearers. For him and others in the land, the direct relation between the two was problematic: it caused fear and distress, as Jeremiah's words revealed "I am only a child, I don't know how to speak." He was apprehensive.

This relation takes place in the world of men. Imagine a three-sided box as the world with an arrow that points inside. Worldly minds and agendas react to this kind of thing: Jeremiah, for instance, didn't think he could do the job. This also shows the gulf between the Word of God and human consciousness. The consciousness of God is distinct from ours – so much so, that what He asks seems extreme or radical. We have to pass over this gulf. It would look like this: the word of God → via faith → behavior = equals obedience.

We can say nothing about His consciousness, because it is what it is, but we deal with representations of it. Jeremiah teaches in chapter 1 that there has to be a direct relationship between mind of God via faith to our behavior.

2. *The second direct relation is that of God → Jeremiah the prophet.* This direct relation reinforces Jeremiah and assures him he can complete mission because God is with him. His performance in the task isn't context-dependent. God himself will be with him. It's not resource dependent, either, nor human dependent (his skills and talents). His performance will be dependent on the direct relation to himself by God. When he objects, the Lord agrees that he cannot do it himself, but he can with Him.
3. *The third direct relation is that of God → time and history.* Verses 12-14 show this. The image of a boiling pot shows that somebody will get scalded. God is about to summon the northern kingdoms. He shows through this that He governs events, time, and history. This isn't determined by thinkers like Hegel nor Marx; nor by dialectics and grouping of humans, nor even by local governments. Time

and history have parameters put there by God Himself, and Jeremiah must believe this. His faith must rest in the validity of God's statements made to him.

*These 3 direct relations are the underpinnings of his work for the Lord.*

4. *The fourth direct relation is that between Jeremiah → the people.* This seen in verse 18. God warns Jeremiah that the king of Judah and the priests and officials will fight against him. The evil opposition to the Lord will have access to the life of Jeremiah and will make his life and work difficult. He will pay a price. Powers and numbers (verse 19) will not overcome him. Therefore the efficacy of this direct relation will only hold up to a fixed point and beyond that point, the efficacy is meaningless. Jeremiah is to understand and reason from these four direct relations, and his life and his service will materialize within him these 4 direct relations.

If this is true, his reasoning and behavior are not to be functions of the facts of experience. If we had a graphic of the 4 relations, it might look like a rectangle with God above, and arrows down the four direct relations within the rectangle.

At the top of the list is the direct relation with time and history.  
Then the relations of the word of God to mind and behavior  
Then the direct relation between God and Jeremiah  
Then the direct relation between evil opposition and Jeremiah.

Part of Jeremiah's readiness to serve the Lord will involve his being conscious of these 4 direct relations, which must be prominent. As a man facing all this, he is caught up in all the swirls and eddies created by these 4 direct relations. And we also caught up in these four as well.

In Genesis 3 and at Kadesh, we see sin depicted as a false direct relation, that of Circumstances → man. Because man believed he could secure his desires and his wellbeing that way, it makes sense to follow. But God told Jeremiah that was the undoing of Judah and other peoples. Idolatry is the result of direct relations of just this sort. Man directly creates his gods on basis of his relation to language, what their hands have made.

Another example is that of Exodus 32, the golden calf incident. Here the people of Judah had severed and forsaken the direct relations of God, turned to an idol.

Our text says in verse 16 that judgments were coming because of forsaking God and worshipping what their hands have made.

A timeline in Chapter 1 of Jeremiah confirms the fundamental fact that the Consciousness of God governs time, whether we know that or not. It might look like this:

On the left is the eternal purpose (verses 4-5.) Jeremiah had been formed in the womb (verses 4-5). In verse 5, he was set apart before his birth. In verse 5, he was appointed a prophet. All of these precede Jeremiah himself.

You might have at this point two vertical lines intersect this timeline to represent the consciousness of Jeremiah. What precedes these lines is what happened before he was conscious of it. Now he's made conscious of it.

Next on timeline: He demurs (verse 6).

Then God puts a big "V" in the timeline when He speaks in verse 7

Then He tells what He, the Lord will do.

Then on the timeline are verses 11 and 16, the two images of coming power.

Verses 17-19 tell Jeremiah to get ready.

There will be conflict, says the Lord to Jeremiah, but you will prevail. The timeline confirms something fundamental about Himself— God would say, My consciousness governs all of time, all of your life. Jeremiah, though, is now just becoming conscious of it.

Whenever people forsook the Lord it was always because they lost consciousness of direct relations, especially those between God → time/history/events. When that happens, everything then became based on circumstances → man. All cultures, anything that is man-based or society-based, proves that human consciousness has suffered a reduction. Human consciousness in this actually shrinks, becomes less, because it is unaware of the four direct relations and what they mean.

This happened to Judah, now it happens to many churches: a shrinkage of human consciousness. It is what the serpent in Genesis 3 wanted when he urged them not to figure God in the mix when they made decisions and took action.

Man → circumstances is always a mistake. One reason, as James says, is that you can die before you reach your goals.

An axiom: To be free of God and his word is to be captive to the self and to the collectivity of selves. This isn't just true in theology or church, it is true for everyday life too.

The purpose of Jeremiah as a prophet was to restore the larger consciousness among the people, from kings on down. This is always the purpose of Biblical teaching, of preaching, to enlarge the consciousness of people of faith, and those who are not faithful but will listen.

The revelation of God is calculated to make us participants in the larger consciousness of God and to create a participation with him. This participation is one He creates when He bridges that gap. We can't do it, it is an act of God alone. We see this in verse 9 when God bridges a gulf by reaching out and touching Jeremiah's mouth. This isn't our province, but the work of God.

In such a participation, Jeremiah's personal reach is being expanded beyond his natural reach because he's participating in the consciousness of God via His word.

Part of what God said to Jeremiah acted to restore a part of human consciousness that has been willfully rejected as meaningless. The timeline shows Jeremiah wasn't conscious at first, on the first two segments of his timeline. But through speaking to him, God made him aware or conscious. His consciousness was made to conform to the consciousness of God, and pulled away from being based on fear or self-interest. Our consciousness are a problem! Jeremiah's consciousness had to be brought into the preexisting purpose of God.

On the timeline, we can imagine a big "C" that moves Jeremiah into the consciousness or the mind of God. This is something that should be happening to us, too --in our understanding of Scripture.

This means this timeline wasn't Jeremiah's, was the Lord's. Jeremiah was a merely a participant in God's timeline. He underwent a preparation of a kind of human consciousness.

That means there was pre-existing truth outside his consciousness. The language of the text tells us this, that he was to participate in something outside his consciousness in the way he spoke and behaved. God was telling him, "Go, speak, be fearless, you will be rescued."

We learn from this something about the mind of God and the mind of man. We are invited in to participate in the mind of God. Such a thing changes the status of man. But what happened in Judah happens here—when God seen merely as a participant in the mind of man, the status of God changes. That is the definition of idolatry.

Notice there was a point at which Jeremiah's consciousness was not a participant in the mind of God. But the Word of God is the means to create participation.

However, we can use Scripture in such a way as to not achieve participation. What is lost and aborted is that participation. People who do this end up "not in the game."

Participation of the right sort establishes a link between the primary (God, his mind and Word) and the mind of man. Fear, self interest, and other things reverse the order. In such a reversal, man does his own analysis of the world and mind of God—to see if He fits in, if and does what we tell him to do. In 2 Timothy 4 we see an example of apostasy. Here is a diminished god who is a participant and human consciousness is the primary.

Apostate thinking wants God to participate, not rule; and for the visible and experiential to be the primary.

How can I verify my participation? What is my relation to the Word? Verification is seen in how I speak and in my behavior. Assertion is not enough, we have to produce. We in the churches often don't use the phenomenon of manifestation (proof), but just assertion. One great evil of idolatry, is the use of obstruction /mediation. For example, one might say that the relationship between one's mind and Scripture must be mediated by common sense, or mediated by historical perspective, or mediated by confidence in human experience and natural law. Sometime godless opposition is mediated by avoidance. But God said to Jeremiah that he was not to try to avoid such opposition, that he would be protected.

How do we bridge the gulf between human consciousness and the Word of God?

The answer: Eliminate mediation. We must be in the active reprovial of mediation. Numbers 13 and 14 show how we must get rid of mediation. We see it in 2 Samuel 24, numbering the troops.

What does mediation do to Biblical faith? It shrinks faith. If we use the language of mediation we buy into higher criticism and others errors. We are supposed to obey the Lord. Mediation makes the Word of God subordinate to human mind and experience, which the axiomatic starting point. We have done this in aces, so much that it becomes the true axiom for life which is idolatry.

Do we start with the consciousness of God, or with the human axiom?

Jeremiah attacked mediation. If you mediate, you end up with a mediated perception of reality. In the churches, we have a reading of scripture that is essentially the practice of mediation. Mediation is the only way to get rid of direct relations. And unfortunately, the Restoration Movement built on mediation that removes direct relations.

Ninevah was saved by the comprehension of the Word of God and mind and behavior. What they concluded, saved them. The Queen of the South when she came to Solomon saw the importance of direct relations. The Ninevites and the Queen didn't object to direct relations.

When we mediate the Word of God with common sense, historical perspective, natural laws or anything else to avoid suffering, this reduces us. Mediation is forsaking God, and leads to idolatry.

Culture mediates our language. But direct relations supply to us our language for representation. The greatest means of mediation between our minds and Scripture is rationalism. It's malignant; it's the shrinkage of our consciousness that dictates that the consciousness of God and its strictures aren't valid.

Jeremiah 1 shows that direct relations are the key to the salvation of Jeremiah and nation.  
Direct relations are the key to our salvation, too.

**FINAL EMPHASIS: THE WORLD SAYS YOU ARE ADVANCING AND  
AUGMENTING CONSCIOUSNESS BY USING ITS WAYS AND MEANS. BUT  
GOD SAYS IT IS SHRINKING.**