

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5 WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

“Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

‘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.’”¹

It is most humbling to realise that we cannot boast of anything we possess or of who we are. Before ever life began, God was at work in the life of His child determining who that child would be and how he or she would be equipped to live out life. From a practical point of view, we did not choose our parents, where we would be born or even what genetic gifts we would possess. Some individuals are prepared to argue that we are the result of a sort of genetic crap shoot—a mindless dance of an almost limitless recombination of strands of DNA. However, the Word of God reveals a mighty hand guiding the life of the Christian.

I am not addressing unbelievers who have determined that they are masters of their own fate. Likely, such individuals have scant interest in anything a Baptist preacher might say. For the most part, I am addressing professing Christians who profess to believe in a God who is intimately involved in guiding their lives. Most professing Christians believe that their life is not defined by serendipity or accident. Knowledgeable Christians are confident that God both cares for them and that He has directed their life even before they were born.

Where does a child of God derive such confidence? What has God said to give such comfort to one who believes? The questions are not inconsequential or serendipitous. Rather, such queries lie at the heart of our understanding of who we are and how we are said to be in the image of God. The understanding of our personhood lies at the root of the revulsion we feel in the knowledge of the slaughter of the unborn and motivates our opposition to condoning taking the life of those who require care and assistance. We who know God, who understand His work in our life and our position before Him, are not merely uncomfortable at the thought of taking life; we stand athwart society’s efforts to justify killing the most vulnerable in society. While the teaching of our relationship to the True and Living God is woven throughout the warp and woof of the Word of God, one particular passage in Jeremiah’s writing informs us of God’s work in the life of His child before the child is even conceived.

BEFORE I WAS BORN — The Prophecy of Jeremiah begins, not surprisingly, with the Prophet’s account of his appointment to divine service. He speaks first of the period in which he prophesied. We need to have this information in order to understand some of the prophecies. “The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month” [**JEREMIAH 1:1-3**].

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from **The Holy Bible: English Standard Version**. Wheaton: Good News Publishers, 2001. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

Jeremiah then gives us the specific statement concerning his appointment. “Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

‘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.’”

[JEREMIAH 1:4, 5]

This divine announcement will receive our full attention during the message; but it is important to take a moment to note Jeremiah’s response to God’s announcement.

“Then I said, ‘Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.’ 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.
Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
declares the LORD.’

“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.
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”’

[JEREMIAH 1:6-10].

In a recent message, I commented on Jeremiah’s appointment to divine service. In that prior message, I stated, “Long years ago I took to heart God’s admonition to Jeremiah when he began his service before the LORD God. ‘Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all that I command you. Do not break down before their faces, lest I break you before them’ [JEREMIAH 1:17].”²

“As intimidating as his listeners may be, the preacher must watch that he does not he jump from the frying pan of congregational opposition into the fire of God’s humiliation. When a preacher seeks peace with man, he can find himself at war with God. Since I’ve just cited God’s command to Jeremiah, it is appropriate to examine Jeremiah’s appointment to preach. When God first called Jeremiah as His servant, the young man hardly qualified as a fire-breather. In fact, his initial reaction to God’s call was decidedly timid. Protesting that he was but a youth, Jeremiah, like Moses before him, attempted to decline the divine commission [see JEREMIAH 1:6].

“Do you blame him? Jeremiah was a member of the priestly clan [see JEREMIAH 1:1]; and the LORD gave him a devastating message. Jeremiah must have shuddered at the thought of telling his countrymen and his fellow priests that everything they held dear—the nation of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, even the temple of the LORD itself—was about to be judged and destroyed.

² Institute for Scripture Research, **The Scriptures** (Institute for Scripture Research (Pty) Ltd, South Africa) 2000

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

“In spite of the young man’s fears, God pressed His demand—‘Dress yourself for work.’ The life of priestly ease Jeremiah once enjoyed was finished. Jeremiah was now a prophet of God given one mandate: ‘Say to them everything that I command you’ [see **JEREMIAH 1:17**]. From this point onward he would be under appointment from the True and Living God.

“The newly appointed prophet had every reason to be fearful—literally all the great men of Israel would stand against him [see **JEREMIAH 1:18, 19**]. Therefore, The LORD commanded him, ‘Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them.’ The Hebrew word ‘dismayed’ (*hata*) also means ‘broken’ or ‘cracked.’ If Jeremiah abandoned his confidence in the LORD and cowered before men, then God would break him. Only confidence in the LORD would enable him to succeed in his new appointment.

“Jeremiah was charged to say all that God commanded him to say [see **JEREMIAH 1:7**]. This same concept is conveyed in the text today, ‘Preach the Word.’ We who preach are to preach ‘the whole counsel of God’ [**ACTS 20:27**] and not merely preach the parts that give no offence. It is Christ the Lord who empowers His servant for this holy office of declaring the truth of God. Of this you may be certain, the faithful pastor will offend—not out of any love for controversy, but because preaching Christ crucified is an offence.”³

What I want you to note at this time is that Jeremiah did not seek appointment. I understand that Paul speaks highly of men who “aspire[] to the office of overseer,” stating that such an individual “desires a noble task” [see **1 TIMOTHY 3:1**]. However, all the desire one can muster will not move the hand of God—He must appoint; man must not promote himself. Moreover, God’s appointment does not appear to be precipitous or capricious—He has planned whom He would have to serve Him and in what capacity such service is to be rendered long before an individual ever imagined that he would be serving the Living God.

We know that the redeemed are elect from before the foundations of the world. Paul writes, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved” [**EPHESIANS 1:3-6**]. Therefore, since we were chosen in Christ “before the foundation of the world,” is it difficult to understand that those whom He will appoint to holy service are likewise appointed before they are even conceived? If God gives life, then there is no difficulty to realise that He can appoint whom He wills to serve in whatever capacity He deems best.

Thus, we likewise see the LORD God speaking through Isaiah,

“But now hear, O Jacob my servant,
Israel whom I have chosen!
Thus says the LORD who made you,
who formed you from the womb and will help you:
Fear not, O Jacob my servant,
Jeshurun whom I have chosen.”

[**ISAIAH 44:1, 2**]

³ Michael Stark, “The Pastor is the Church’s Theologian,” Sermon preached 11 January, 2015, <http://newbeginningsbaptist.ca/clientimages/42652/sermonarchive/2%20timothy%204.01-05%20the%20pastor%20is%20the%20church's%20theologian.pdf>

Take note of a simple matter when God says,

“Thus says the LORD who made you,
who formed you from the womb and will help you:”

[ISAIAH 44:2]

The pronoun is masculine, singular in this strophe. Though God appears to be speaking broadly to the nation, He addresses Israel as one someone in the womb. It is a means by which God is affirming the sanctity of the unborn child, even in the womb. Nor should anyone imagine that this is an accident of speech somehow overlooked when Isaiah wrote his prophecy.

Soon after this singular strophe, Isaiah wrote:

“Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
who formed you from the womb:
‘I am the LORD, who made all things,
who alone stretched out the heavens,
who spread out the earth by myself,
who frustrates the signs of liars
and makes fools of diviners,
who turns wise men back
and makes their knowledge foolish,
who confirms the word of his servant
and fulfills the counsel of his messengers,
who says of Jerusalem, “She shall be inhabited,”
and of the cities of Judah, “They shall be built,
and I will raise up their ruins”;
who says to the deep, “Be dry;
I will dry up your rivers”;
who says of Cyrus, “He is my shepherd,
and he shall fulfill all my purpose”;
saying of Jerusalem, “She shall be built,”
and of the temple, “Your foundation shall be laid.””

[ISAIAH 44:24-28]

The pronouns in the twenty-fourth verse continue to be masculine and singular. In this great prophecy declaring God’s sovereignty, the prophecy is addressed to someone whom the LORD God testifies was divinely formed in the womb. There is no other reasonable understanding of the Prophet’s intent to convey the message that God gives life. In this prophecy of divine sovereignty we witness a powerful testimony of divine participation in giving life to the unborn.

I understand that our modern culture imagines that we know all about life, that we have mastered life itself. Among my earliest studies while preparing for a career in medical research were a series of studies in embryology. Later, I served a post-doctoral fellowship in obstetrics and gynecology. I understand that we have a fair grasp of the mechanics of ovulation, fertilisation, implantation and subsequent development of the child *in utero*. However, we must understand that modern science does not have all the answers, nor is it likely that mankind shall ever have all the answers concerning propagation of life.

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

The Bible is consistent in presenting the Lord God as the Author of life. Let me point to a couple of addition passages that speak of His authority over life. The seventy-first Psalm presents a similar theme to the twenty-second Psalm. Certainly, one portion from either of these Psalms parallels each other. Here is the pertinent portion from the seventy-first Psalm.

“Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked,
from the grasp of the unjust and cruel man.
For you, O Lord, are my hope,
my trust, O LORD, from my youth.
Upon you I have leaned from before my birth;
you are he who took me from my mother’s womb.
My praise is continually of you.”

[PSALM 71:4-6]

The Psalmist speaks of leaning upon God from before his birth. These verses mirror what David wrote in **PSALM 22:9-11**. That this may be mere poetic language with no significance cannot be ruled out merely by looking at what is written. However, in light of the prophetic passages we just viewed in Isaiah and considering the text for this message, I suggest it is best to see that this statement of the Psalmist is part of a consistent message—God gives life.

Let’s look at something that the Apostle Paul wrote, almost in passing. The particular passage is found in the opening paragraphs of one of his earliest letters, that which was written to the churches of Galatia. You recall that Paul defended himself, speaking of his appointment to apostleship. “I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus” [**GALATIANS 1:11-17**].

Without getting bogged down in all that the Apostle does reveal in this apologia, take special note of his statement concerning God’s work when Paul was set apart for divine service. Paul was set apart before he was born—this is an essential point. It was not merely that God was at work (as He always is), God designated the specific and difficult work that the Apostle must perform and this divine appointment was before the birth of Saul of Tarsus!

The truth that I want you to grasp is that God transcends our conception of time. God has neither beginning nor end. Moreover, dwelling as He does in eternity, God has worked for the benefit of those whom He chose, appointing some to one service and others to another service. Together, these redeemed individuals are appointed by God even before they are conceived in their mothers’ wombs.

I am not straying far from the thrust of this point when I note that before time began God chose each believer and appointed her or him to the ministry she or he is to conduct. If you are a Christian, your service before God is not an accident—it was given by the gracious Lord who appoints whom He wills to the service He has chosen and who also apportions rich gifts to ensure that you will be successful in the work He has assigned.

Speaking of the gifts God gives to His people, the Apostle writes, “To each [believer] is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:7].

The Apostle continues by stating that each of the gifted individuals comprising a congregation “are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:11].

Soon after this, Paul attested, “As it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:18].

The Apostle has also written of God’s sovereign choice, “God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another” [1 CORINTHIANS 12:24, 25].

A congregation is composed of disparate individuals, brought together by the Spirit of God in order to reveal Christ within that particular community. This assembly of saints, called a church, is appointed to work in harmony to reveal the Person of Christ through their united work. You have heard me say, and I stress it once again—we do not join a church, we are appointed to a church by the Spirit of God who lives within. This appointment, and the equipping we receive for service, was determined by the Lord God before the world began.

GOD’S CREATIVE WORK — God addresses the prophet, informing him that He—the LORD GOD—gave Jeremiah his body. Moreover, the LORD God knew the prophet even before he was formed. The implication is immense for each of us. God knew us and God gave us our being. The physical parameters that define what we see when we look at one another, the intellect that allows us to converse with one another, the personality that draws us to one another—all alike were determined by God and given to us before we were formed. There was no randomisation of separate DNA strands combining to define who we are; all this was under God’s control. You are precisely what God has permitted to the praise of His glory.

Let me take a moment to make a significant statement in light of modern efforts to transform our bodies into something we find more acceptable. The dietary efforts of modern society are astounding! Nutrisystem, Herbal Magic, Jenny Craig and 24,599,997 (twenty-four million five hundred ninety-nine thousand nine hundred ninety-seven) more concepts are touted on various search engines. Each vies for dominance in the mind of modern Canadians. We are the first generation to be so obsessed with our appearance that we can spend a significant proportion of our income and our energies trying to lose the same pounds that we put on because of our affluence.

I don’t want anyone to imagine that I am disparaging caring for our health. Neither am I advocating that we should purposefully abuse our bodies simply because we are practising some perverted form of the cult of spiritual nudity. Neither should we imagine that I would approve of refusing to improve our minds, our understanding of God and of our relationship to Him. I do not want us to live in an environment in which we sound like the preprogrammed Betas described in Huxley’s “Brave New World.”

“Gammas are stupid. They all wear green, and Delta children wear khaki. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. Oh no, I don't want to play with Delta children. And Epsilons are still worse. They're too stupid to be able to read or write. Besides they wear black, which is such a beastly colour. I'm so glad I'm a Beta. Alpha children wear grey. They work much harder than we do, because they're so frightfully clever. I'm really awfully glad I'm a Beta, because I don't work so hard. And then we are much better than the Gammas and Deltas.”⁴

⁴ Aldous Huxley, **Brave New World**, Chapter 2, 1931

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

What I do mean to caution against is the idea that because we are dissatisfied with our looks that we must “improve” ourselves. Such an attitude is vanity, an embrace of the cult of self-love. Think of God’s gift of who you are. David, reflecting on God’s participation in making him who he was, wrote:

“You formed my inward parts;
 you knitted me together in my mother’s womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
 my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
 intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
 the days that were formed for me,
 when as yet there was none of them.”

[PSALM 139:13-16]

The Psalmist knew that the LORD had given him his stature and his facial characteristics. His bodily systems so necessary for growth and continued life were fashioned by God’s hands. David’s physical body was seen in the mind of God even before He was born. The days in which he would live—days in which he would be called to perform great and heroic deeds, were determined by the LORD God who made him. Even the number of his days was determined by God who gave David life. The same is true for each of us who are children of the LORD God.

Our restless, broken natures drive us to attempt to improve on what God has made us. Have we never read that Christ cautioned us, “You cannot make one hair white or black” [MATTHEW 5:36b]. Despite the advertising dollars expended in an effort to induce you to try Clairol or Garnier or L’Oreal Paris or to promote Just For Men, it does not lie within your purview to change the colour of your hair. In fact, God even knows the number of hairs in your head. He says, “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” [LUKE 12:7a].

I cite these statements from the Master in order to encourage us to discover satisfaction with who we are, knowing that God Himself gave us our being. Short, tall, skinny, fat, blonde, carmine, fair, dark—God made us who we are. Moreover, we who are saved realised that He called us as we were. God did not say, “Change yourself and then I will accept you”; God received us just as He created us. Were we to accept this singular truth, our lives and service before God would be transformed.

Again, this is not a plea to cease all efforts to improve ourselves. We should each be aware of the apostolic dictum, “Let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches.” Paul continues by stating, “Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. Were you a bondservant when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) For he who was called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a bondservant of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men. So, brothers, in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God” [1 CORINTHIANS 7:17, 20-24].

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

When we focus so intensely on our bodies that we are allowing what we perceive to be the ideal of others, we have become “bondservants of men.” When we attempt to influence the opinion of others by how we look, we have ceased serving God and begun to serve man. Thus, the benefit of understanding that God was at work in your life even before you were formed leads to confidence in who you are because of God’s creative work. Moreover, you know that God has chosen to work in your life just as you now are and not as you might imagine you must become. I have often quoted the pithy saying of a Texas divine, “God can hit some mighty straight licks with some mighty crooked sticks.” God seeks authenticity and not artificiality.

If we were able to see ourselves as we shall be at Christ’s return, we would be overwhelmed with awe. If we could see what we are destined to be—not what we can attempt to make ourselves, but what God has planned for us—we would be lost in wonder and admiration. In this context, consider the familiar words of the Apostle of Love. “Now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure” [1 JOHN 2:28-3:3].

Encourage yourself with Paul’s statement, “Our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself” [PHILIPPIANS 3:20, 21].

Surely, it is demonstrable that “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known” [1 CORINTHIANS 13:12].

God formed Jeremiah in the womb; and God formed you in the womb. Before He formed Jeremiah in his mother’s womb, God knew him. Similarly, for you who are children of the True and Living God, before He formed you in your mother’s womb, He knew you. He knew your interests, your passions, your flaws—He created you! The great danger of making this statement is that someone will begin to imagine that since God formed them, giving them their being, they are not responsible for what they do. That very question has been addressed in Paul’s Letter to Roman Christians. “You will say to me then, ‘Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?’ But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use” [ROMANS 9:19-21]?

GOD’S AUTHORITATIVE CALL — I am humbled in the knowledge of Christ’s call to life and to service. Jeremiah speaks of his call to service. I suggest, however, that the call to life is the call to service. Christ does not call His child to life and then direct them to step away from service. Writing the Ephesian encyclical, the Apostle wrote the familiar words of verses eight and nine, “By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” [EPHESIANS 2:8, 9]. Many of us have memorised those two verses. How many of us, however, have learned the verse that follows? Paul has written, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” [EPHESIANS 2:10].

We are saved to serve. God has no spiritual gift of warming a pew. God does not appoint anyone to be a drone. God calls us to be workers, not shirkers. As he opened this missive, Paul had written, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him” [EPHESIANS 1:3, 4].

The Christian has been taught, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” [COLOSSIANS 3:5-10].

What must be firmly established in the mind of each believer is that we are not only called to life in Christ the Lord, but we who believe are called to service. When we were saved, we were gifted by the Spirit of God, as we have already witnessed [see 1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-28]. That God has elected the child of God to life is evident from what is written in the Word.⁵ That we are appointed to service in general and to specific areas of service to the glory of God is often neglected, though it is equally evident from even a cursory review of what is written in the Word.⁶ Consequently, too many of the professed people of God live as though the mantra repeated by religious advocates throughout the past six decades is somehow scriptural—attend the church of your choice.

I sound like a broken record, but it is because too many have not grasped the reality of the Word. We do not “join” a church; we are appointed by God. We are appointed in order to serve and not merely to enjoy ourselves. The purpose of the church is not our enjoyment; it is to equip us to serve effectively. However, we have convinced ourselves that we are the masters of our own lives, forgetting what is written in the Word. “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory” [COLOSSIANS 3:1-4].

How does all this fit into a service that is designed to teach respect for life? When we invade the sanctity of the womb in order to slaughter the unborn, we are killing off those whom God has given as gifts. We are despising the gift of God, inviting divine judgement for our wicked rejection of Him and of His good gifts. Who can say that we have not slaughtered gifted preachers, brilliant scientists and physicians who would give even greater health to our broken world, wise economists who would enable us to live without fear of financial failure, or even courageous warriors and leaders who would direct us through this fallen world?

Because we have permitted the slaughter of the unborn through our silence, is it not true that we tacitly adopt, or at least permit adoption of the view that man’s personal convenience is the summum bonum of life? If we are silent, are we not complicit in coarsening our culture? When our society is no longer able to value life, however vulnerable the individual, is it not in great measure due to our own quiet acceptance of what is?

⁵ E.g., see ROMANS 11:7; COLOSSIANS 3:12; 1 THESSALONIANS 1:4; 2 THESSALONIANS 2:12, 13 TITUS 1:1; 1 PETER 2:3-10

⁶ E.g., ROMANS 12:3-8; 1 CORINTHIANS 12:14-30; 1 PETER 4:10, 11

JEREMIAH 1:4, 5
WHEN DOES LIFE BEGIN?

I am not suggesting that we need to organise a noisy march or some violent intervention. I am suggesting that it is in the daily realm of life that we are engaged. It is through interaction with friends and family, with neighbours and with colleagues that we reveal respect for life. Our speech, whether we demonstrate respect for our children or whether we joke about the hardship of parenthood, betrays our underlying disdain for life. Ultimately, whether we accept God's appointment in our own lives demonstrates our confidence that He both gives life and directs the affairs of those who call Him Lord.

To be certain, I've spoken to Christians; I've endeavoured to encourage each one to accept God's appointment to service where He has placed them and to labour to excel in the tasks He has given. However, it is impossible to serve until you are alive in Christ the Lord. Christians are made by Christ the Saviour. He died because of your sin; and He was raised from the grave for your justification. Now, the Word of God calls you, saying, "If you agree with God, 'Jesus Christ is Master,' believing with your whole being that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be set free. You are made right with God when you embrace this truth and when you openly agree with God by speaking of this confidence you are set free" [see **ROMANS 10:9, 10**]. This is the promise of God, "Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved" [**ROMANS 10:13**]. I pray this includes you. Amen.