

some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

²⁰When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the Tent of Meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. ²¹He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. ²²The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.

²³Then Aaron is to go into the Tent of Meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. ²⁴He shall bathe himself with water in a holy place and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. ²⁵He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

²⁶The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. ²⁷The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and offal are to be burned up. ²⁸The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp.

²⁹This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves^a and not do any work—whether native-born or an alien living among you—³⁰because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. ³¹It is a sabbath of rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. ³²The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments³³ and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the Tent of Meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the people of the community.

³⁴This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites."

And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Eating Blood Forbidden

17 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: 'This is what the LORD has commanded: ³Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox,^b a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it ⁴instead of bringing it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD—that man shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; he has shed blood and must be cut off from his people. ⁵This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings.^c ⁶The priest is to sprinkle the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. ⁷They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols^d to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

⁸"Say to them: 'Any Israelite or any alien living among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice ⁹and does not bring it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD—that man must be cut off from his people.

¹⁰"Any Israelite or any alien living among them who eats any blood—I will set my face against that person who eats blood and will cut him off from his people. ¹¹For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life. ¹²Therefore I say to the Israelites, 'None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood.'

¹³"Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, ¹⁴because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to

^a29 Or *must fast*; also in verse 31

^b3 The Hebrew word can include both male and female.

^c5 Traditionally *peace offerings*

^d7 Or *demons*

JEREMIAH



Jeremiah writes this book as he watches a nation disintegrate morally from within. His warnings and pleas for Judah to return to God fall on deaf ears. And his words often place him in danger—political and religious leaders are increasingly angry with him and his messages of impending judgment. Throughout the book, Jeremiah complains to God about his job as a prophet, denounces Judah’s kings for their weaknesses and chastises the people for going their own way. But Jeremiah also includes, as part of his message, words about a loving God who desires a people worthy of his name. Since Jeremiah’s grim speeches are arranged thematically in this book, it might be helpful to read the history of Judah in Kings and Chronicles to better understand the chronology of his words.

Jeremiah’s roots in a godly family helped keep him secure from the temptations that corrupted so many in Judah. His life reaffirms the powerful influence of a godly mother, even when societal values and peer pressure seem like they will win out. For spiritual success, our children must learn from us that sin has its consequences, but God’s last word for those who will repent is forgiveness.

1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. ²The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, ³and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

The Call of Jeremiah

⁴The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew^a you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

⁶“Ah, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am only a child.”

⁷But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. ⁸Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD.

⁹Then the LORD reached out his hand and

^aOr *chose*

touched my mouth and said to me, "Now, I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

¹¹The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

¹²The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching^a to see that my word is fulfilled."

¹³The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?"

"I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered.

¹⁴The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. ¹⁵I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD.

"Their kings will come and set up their thrones
in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem;
they will come against all her
surrounding walls
and against all the towns of Judah.

¹⁶I will pronounce my judgments on my people
because of their wickedness in
forsaking me,
in burning incense to other gods
and in worshiping what their hands
have made.

¹⁷"Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. ¹⁸Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. ¹⁹They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Israel Forsakes God

2 The word of the LORD came to me: ²"Go and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"I remember the devotion of your youth,
how as a bride you loved me

and followed me through the desert,
through a land not sown.

³Israel was holy to the LORD,
the firstfruits of his harvest;
all who devoured her were held guilty,
and disaster overtook them,"
declares the LORD.

⁴Hear the word of the LORD, O house of
Jacob,
all you clans of the house of Israel.

⁵This is what the LORD says:

"What fault did your fathers find in me,
that they strayed so far from me?
They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.

⁶They did not ask, 'Where is the LORD,
who brought us up out of Egypt
and led us through the barren wilderness,
through a land of deserts and rifts,
a land of drought and darkness,^b
a land where no one travels and no
one lives?'

⁷I brought you into a fertile land
to eat its fruit and rich produce.
But you came and defiled my land
and made my inheritance detestable.

⁸The priests did not ask,
'Where is the LORD?'
Those who deal with the law did not
know me;
the leaders rebelled against me.
The prophets prophesied by Baal,
following worthless idols.

⁹"Therefore I bring charges against you
again,"
declares the LORD.

"And I will bring charges against your
children's children.

¹⁰Cross over to the coasts of Kittim^c and
look,
send to Kedar^d and observe closely;
see if there has ever been anything
like this:

¹¹Has a nation ever changed its gods?
(Yet they are not gods at all.)
But my people have exchanged their^e
Glory
for worthless idols.

¹²Be appalled at this, O heavens,
and shudder with great horror,"
declares the LORD.

^a12 The Hebrew for *watching* sounds like the Hebrew for *almond tree*. ^b6 Or *and the shadow of death*

^c10 That is, Cyprus and western coastlands ^d10 The home of Bedouin tribes in the Syro-Arabian desert

^e11 Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition *my*

Treasures in Jars of Clay

4 Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart. ²Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. ³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴The god of this age has

blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," ^a made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

⁷But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is

^a6 Gen. 1:3

THE WEEKEND

GET GROWING

W

God's View of Me

Passage:

2 Corinthians 2:14–16

Additional Scripture

Readings:

Psalms 139

Ephesians 3:14–19

When we belong to God, we draw strength through understanding just who he says we are. Who does God say that I am?

I am made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27).

I am a child of God (John 1:12).

I am a temple—a dwelling place—of God. His

Spirit and his life live in me (1 Corinthians 3:16).

I am a saint (Ephesians 1:18).

I am righteous and holy (Ephesians 4:24).

I am chosen and appointed by Christ to bear his fruit (John 15:16).

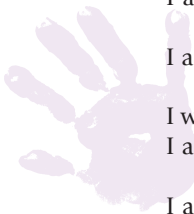
I am God's workmanship—his handiwork—born anew in Christ to do good works (Ephesians 2:10).

I am chosen of God, holy and dearly loved (Colossians 3:12).

I will resemble Christ when he returns (1 John 3:1–2).

I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14).

I am God's treasured possession (Deuteronomy 14:2).



For your next devotional reading go to page 1195.

from God and not from us. ⁸We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; ⁹persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. ¹⁰We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. ¹¹For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body. ¹²So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

¹³It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."^a With that same spirit of faith we also believe and therefore speak, ¹⁴because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you in his pres-

ence. ¹⁵All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

¹⁶Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. ¹⁷For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. ¹⁸So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Our Heavenly Dwelling

5 Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven,

^a13 Psalm 116:10

MONDAY

So Why Do We Suffer?

Passage:

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Additional Scripture

Readings:

Romans 8:28-29

1 Peter 4:12-13

W

hat purpose does an all-powerful, loving God have in allowing suffering among the very people he created in his image and then died for? Tough question, isn't it?

Noted theologian A.H. Strong wrote, "God can do all that he wills, but he will not do all that he can." That helps some.

Two implications of this truth help us cope with the incomprehensible suffering all around us.

First, God's power is always conformed to his purpose. Our God endures for a time the sinful condition of our world so that eventually he can accomplish his higher purpose of redeeming the human race.

Second, God clothes his power in love. It is in the form of a man—born in a cattle shed, walking the shores of Galilee, mocked and spit upon and killed on a cross—that God extends his power. His power never stands naked. It is always clothed with love.

God can do all that he will, but he won't do all that he can—because his power is conformed to his purpose and clothed in his love.

For your next devotional reading go to page 1196.

the Israelites, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off."

¹⁵"Anyone, whether native-born or alien, who eats anything found dead or torn by wild animals must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be ceremonially unclean till evening; then he will be clean. ¹⁶But if he does not wash his clothes and bathe himself, he will be held responsible."

Unlawful Sexual Relations

18 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. ³You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. ⁴You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. ⁵Keep my decrees and laws, for the man who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

⁶"No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD.

⁷"Do not dishonor your father by having
♥ sexual relations with your mother. She is
♥ your mother; do not have relations with her.

⁸"Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father.

⁹"Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your
♥ mother's daughter, whether she was born
♥ in the same home or elsewhere.

¹⁰"Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you.

¹¹"Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

¹²"Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative.

♥ ¹³"Do not have sexual relations with
♥ your mother's sister, because she is your
♥ mother's close relative.

¹⁴"Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.

¹⁵"Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her.

¹⁶"Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother.

¹⁷"Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.

¹⁸"Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

¹⁹"Do not approach a woman to have sexual relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.

²⁰"Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

²¹"Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed^a to Molech, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

²²"Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable.

²³"Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

²⁴"Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. ²⁵Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. ²⁶But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the aliens living among you must not do any of these detestable things, ²⁷for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. ²⁸And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

²⁹"Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. ³⁰Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God."

Various Laws

19 The LORD said to Moses, ²"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

^a21 Or to be passed through [the fire]