

# Finding God

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon encourages believers to seek God earnestly, trust in His promises, and be prepared for His return.*

**Duration:** 34:25

**Scripture:** Romans 10:1

**Topics:** "Seeking God", "Second Coming"

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## Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of seeking the Lord with all our hearts, drawing parallels from the captivity of Israel in Babylon and the need for readiness for Christ's return. It emphasizes the significance of being diligent in prayer, seeking God's will, and being prepared for His coming.

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## Transcript

Let's turn now in our Bibles to Romans chapter 10. Our scripture reading today will be the first 13 verses of Romans 10. I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses.

Pastor Brian will lead you in the reading of the even numbered verses and shall we stand as we read. Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God but not according to knowledge.

For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth. For Moses described the righteousness which is of the law that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise. Say not in thine heart who shall ascend into heaven that is to bring Christ down from above or who shall descend into the deep that is to bring Christ up from the dead. But what sayeth it the word is nigh thee even in thy mouth and in thy heart that is the word of faith which we preach.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in thine heart that God has raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek. For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Let's pray. Father we thank you for the certainty of your word that we can put our faith, confidence and trust in what you have said. And we thank you Lord for the way that you have provided for us to be saved.

That if we would just confess that Jesus is Lord with our mouth, just believe in our hearts that you did raise him from the dead. You've promised that we would be saved. We thank you Lord for the certainty of your promises and for your word.

And blessed now we pray as we study your word and as we study your promises and the things Lord that you've predicted. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated. We do have on Saturdays once a month over in the Logos Sanctuary at 7 30 in the evening we have a Christian science fellowship. Those that are interested in science and to look at it from a Christian base.

We have a speaker this week that is Robert Coano Jr. He's just 14 years old but a freshman at Loyola High School in Los Angeles. He's been an avid reader from the age of five. He cut his teeth on the Encyclopedia Britannica.

Read the Bible from cover to cover by the age of eight. He currently reads over 600 words a minute. And math, science are his favorite subjects.

But he's consistently tested in the top 1% of the nation in these subjects. So this young man will be sharing. And it should be quite interesting to hear this young man who has actually recently experienced the entering in of a regional debate competition with his essay based upon creation science.

So I think that you'll find this young man very exciting and fascinating to listen to. And that's Saturday night 7 30 at the sanctuary over at Logos. Tonight Pastor Skip will be leading us in a study through Jeremiah 28 and 29.

And what a wonderful way to go through the Bible chapter by chapters, verse by verse. And Skip has been doing a very commendable job in teaching us the Word of God. And so we encourage you to come out tonight and join with us as we worship the Lord and go through the Bible.

This morning we'd like to draw your attention to Jeremiah chapter 29 and 29. Our text begins in verse 10. For thus saith the Lord, that after 70 years are accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you. They are thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then shall you call upon me and you shall go and pray unto me and I will hearken unto you.

And you will seek me and you will find me when you shall search for me with all your heart. Jeremiah had sent a message to those who had been taken captive to Babylon. The message basically was, settle down, plant vineyards, plant trees.

You're going to be there for quite a while. God has determined that you will be there for 70 years. So make the best of it.

Just settle down and make a life of it while you are there in Babylon. There were false prophets in Babylon that were giving an opposite message. They were saying to the people, don't settle down.

Within two years the power of Babylon will fall and we will go back to Judah and take with us the vessels of the temple. So just hang loose. It's just a short time.

We'll be going back. So there were conflicting prophecies. Jeremiah saying, settle down, it's going to be 70 years that you're going to be there.

The false prophets that were saying, don't settle down, we're going right back within a couple of years. So Jeremiah wrote, verse 8, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your prophets and your diviners that are in the midst of you deceive you, neither listen to their dreams. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name.

I've not sent them, saith the Lord. For thus saith the Lord, that after 70 years are accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you. I will perform my good word toward you in causing you to return to this place.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord. They are thoughts of peace, not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon me, and you shall go and pray unto me, and I will listen unto you.

You will seek me and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart. Now to give you sort of a background. The nation of Israel and Judah had broken the law of God.

Back in Leviticus chapter 25, verse 2, as God was giving the law to the nation, He said, When you come into the land that I'm going to give to you, that you are to give the land a Sabbath. Six years you shall sow your fields, six years prune your vineyards, but the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of rest unto the land, a Sabbath for the Lord. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyards.

So God's program of restoring the land, replenishing the nourishment within the land, was to give the land a rest every seven years. Not to plant, not to prune, just eat whatever came of itself from the land. They did not obey that commandment.

When they came into the land and they settled in the land, they farmed it year after year after year, never taking the Sabbath year or the year of rest. They had been in the land for 490 years, planting consistently every year for 490 years. So the land actually had a rest coming to it.

490 years divided by seven, every seventh year was to be a rest, would give you 70 years that the land had coming to it of rest. And so the Lord said that He would just keep them out of the land for 70 years so that the land would have its rest. In 2 Chronicles 36.18 we read, All of the vessels of the house of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the Lord, the treasures of the king and of the princes, were all brought to Babylon.

And they burnt the house of God, they broke down the wall of Jerusalem, they burnt all of the palaces and destroyed all of the beautiful furnishings. And those that had escaped from the sword were carried away to Babylon, and they were made slaves until the reign of the kingdom of Persia, to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths. For as long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill the 490 years.

I see here an interesting kind of a principle, and that is if I refuse to give God His dues, He has a way of taking them. Here they had not obeyed the commandment of God. The land was due 70 years of rest.

They would not give it to the land, so God took it for the land. And He had given the land the 70 Sabbaths that was coming to it, though they refused to do it themselves. I've observed that when many people refuse to give to God His tithes, but they use them for themselves, that God often exacts His tithes in other ways.

During the time of Haggai the prophet, when they had come back from their Babylonian captivity, and they quit working on the house of God, and they started getting all interested in their own homes, their own houses, the word of the Lord came to Haggai the prophet, saying, because the people are saying, the time has not come to build the Lord's house. Then the word of the Lord came by Haggai the prophet, saying, is it time for you to dwell in your finished houses, while my house still lies waste? Now saith the Lord of hosts, consider these things. You have so much, but you bring in little.

You eat, but you don't have enough. You drink, but you're not full. You clothe yourself, but you're not warm.

Those that earn wages put their wages into bags with holes in them. You sort of found that out? Where did the money go? Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider your ways. Go to the mountain and bring wood and build my house, and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord.

You look for much, it came to little, and when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? Because my house lies waste. While every man is taking care of his own house, therefore bearing fruit, I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the corn, and the new wine, and the oil, and all that the ground brings forth, and upon the men and the cattle, and all of the labor of the hands.

Haggai is saying that you haven't put God first, and therefore God has brought the drought. God has taken from you. You tried to save up for yourself, but you really have less than you did, and should, because God has exacted from you that which he had required of you.

They paid a heavy price, personally and nationally, for not putting God first, and giving to God the first fruits. There's another interesting facet of this prophecy of Jeremiah that he sent to the captives in Babylon. We know that among the captives in Babylon was Daniel.

He was one of the princes that was taken captive in 606 when the first captivity took place. Daniel received this prophecy of Jeremiah, and Daniel had saved this prophecy of Jeremiah. Now Daniel is an old man, 80s or perhaps even into his 90s, when Daniel realized that this prophecy of Jeremiah had declared that they would be captives for 70 years.

And so in as much as the 70 years were about expired, realizing that the captivity was about over, Daniel wrote, in the first year of the reign of Darius the king of Persia, I, Daniel, understood by the word of the Lord which he had spoken to Jeremiah the prophet, saying that he would accomplish 70 years in the desolations of Jerusalem. And these 70 years were about over. I set my face toward the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

And I prayed unto the Lord my God and made my confession and said, O Lord, the great and awesome God that keeps His covenant of mercy to those that love Him and to those that keep His commandments. We have sinned. We've committed iniquity.

We have done wickedly. We've rebelled even by departing from Your precepts and from Your judgments. And neither have we hearkened unto Your servants the prophets which spoke in Your name to our kings and princes and fathers and to all of the people.

You are righteous, but there is confusion this day among the people because of their sins and trespasses. And so Daniel, realizing from the prophecy of Jeremiah, he was a student of prophecy, and he had the prophecies of Jeremiah that he had sent to Babylon. And so Daniel, knowing now that the prophecy was they would be there for 70 years, and he also knew the prophecy of Isaiah, in which prophecy Isaiah declared that Cyrus would be the man that God had chosen to set them free from their captivity.

And knowing that Cyrus was now co-regent over the Medo-Persian empire, for he was the general that conquered the city of Babylon, Daniel was no doubt getting very excited as he saw the pieces coming into place. Isaiah had prophesied concerning Cyrus that, Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the one that formed you from the womb and stretched out the heavens. I turn wise men inside out.

I make their knowledge foolish. I confirm the word of my servants. I say to Jerusalem, you shall be inhabited.

And to the cities of Judah, you shall be built. And I will raise up the ruins thereof. I say to the deep, be dry.

I say of Cyrus, he is my shepherd and shall perform all of my pleasure, even saying to Jerusalem, you shall be rebuilt. And to the temple, your foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I've held, to subdue the nations before him.

I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two levy gates. The gates will not be shut. I will go before you and make the crooked places straight.

I will break in pieces the gates of brass. I will cut and sunder the bars of iron. I will give you the treasures of darkness, the hidden riches of secret places that you may know that I, the Lord, who called you by your name, am the God of Israel.

For Jacob, my servant's sake, and Israel, my elect, I have called you by your name. I have surnamed you, though you have not known me." A marvelous, interesting prophecy made 150 years before Cyrus was ever born. So you have a combination now of two interesting prophecies that deal with the return to their land after their captivity.

One is that the captivity would be for 70 years. Two, that Cyrus would be the king that would allow them to return from their captivity. Now the 70 years are about over and Cyrus has become the king.

I'm sure that Daniel was really getting quite excited because the prophecy is being fulfilled right before his eyes. He has the prophecies of Isaiah. He has the prophecies of Jeremiah.

And by these prophecies, he knew that the time was short. They would soon be going back to Israel. So he sought the Lord.

Combining these prophecies, he knew the time had come. Can you imagine how exciting Daniel must have been when Cyrus was now reigning and the 70 years are about over. He could see the Word of God unfolding before his very eyes in the events that were taking place before him.

God was putting all of the pieces together. Suddenly there was a great hope for the future. As God said to Jeremiah, after 70 years I'll bring them back for I know my thoughts towards them, thoughts of peace not of evil, to give to them a future and a hope.

And suddenly this future is sort of spreading out before them and hope rises in the heart of Daniel. I know the feeling that Daniel must have felt because I have that same feeling today as I look at the Bible prophecies that are being fulfilled before our very eyes as the Bible is filled with prophecies that talk about the coming of Jesus Christ, the rapture of his church, and the establishing of God's kingdom upon the earth. And just as Daniel could see things coming together, so as we look at the conditions of the world today there's excitement because again we see God bringing these things together.

We see that Israel after 2,000 years is back in the land as a nation. We see the European Union formed. We are moving rapidly towards a cashless, checkless society.

We see the Muslim nations threatening to attack Israel. We see weapons of mass destruction proliferating throughout the world as more and more nations are developing nuclear bombs. So also our hope grows as we realize that God has a great future for us as he will soon be taking us to be with him.

Jeremiah went on to say, Then shall you call upon me and you shall go and pray unto me and I will listen unto you and you will seek me and find me when you will search for me with all of your heart. Daniel reading this prophecy of Jeremiah began to pray. He began to seek the Lord with all of his heart.

And so Daniel said, I set my face to the Lord God to seek my prayer and supplication and fasting with sackcloth and ashes. I'd say that's pretty much with all your heart. The committing of himself now of seeking the Lord because he can see that these things are about to transpire.

I think that one of our problems today is that we have sort of a half-hearted attitude towards prophecy, towards the Bible, towards the things of the Lord. We are much like the children of Israel who even those that returned became more interested in their own homes and the building of their own and furnishing of their own houses and the decorating of their own houses. More interested in that than in the house of the Lord and they allowed the house of the Lord to just become in disrepair.

I will confess that I often am not as diligent towards the things of the Lord as I know I should be. I'm not often desperate before God. I take a lot of things and it takes quite a bit to get me really desperate before God.

I remember holding my younger daughter all night long in my arms as she was burning with fever. And I remember as I was there holding her and praying and just rocking her to try to comfort her toward morning as she went into a convulsion and I thought I'm losing this little love of my life, this sunshine that the Lord had brought into the family. I'm losing her.

And I'll tell you I really got desperate before God. Desperate in prayer. When I was a young boy whenever anything would happen I would always, that is pain or hurt or whatever, I'd always run to my mother and ask her to pray.

And she always prayed for us. Every little cut, nicker or whatever she was always praying for us. And one time when I was really hurting and I went to her for prayer and she laid hands on me and prayed that God would touch and heal me.

And when she was through I was still hurting bad and I said, pray again mom but pray this time like you really meant it. And you know I wonder how often do we really pray like we really mean it. You know that it is really something that we are seeking the Lord with all of our heart.

Jesus did warn that when he came again for his church that it was important that we take heed. That we're not so involved in eating and drinking and the cares of this life that that day would catch us unprepared, not ready. As Jesus spoke of the rapture of the church there in Matthew 24 and 25.

He gave a series of parables and each parable the thrust of the parable was the importance of watching and the importance of being ready. The ten virgins, five wise, five foolish, the five wise virgins took their lamps with oil. The others lacked oil.

And so when the cry went out, behold the bridegroom cometh, they said to the five wise, give us of your oil our lamps are going out. And they said, we can't do it lest we be short ourselves. Go and purchase.

And so they went out to get oil and while they were gone the bridegroom came and those Jesus said that were ready went in. Be ye also ready for in such an hour he said as you think not the Son of Man is coming. And a series of parables in which that thrust was be ready.

You don't know when the Lord is coming. This brings to us an important question. The question is are you ready? Jesus said, who is that wise and faithful servant whom his Lord has made the ruler over his household to give them their meat in due season? Blessed is that servant who is Lord when he comes will find him so doing.

Truly I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all of his goods. But if the evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delays his coming and he begins to abuse his authority and begins to eat and drink and be drunken. The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he's not looking for him.

In an hour when he is not expecting he will cut him asunder and appoint his destiny with the hypocrites and there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The question is if the Lord should come today and surely he could. The signs are out.

Should he come today? Would you be ready? That's the big issue. Are we ready for our Lord to come? Now even as when Jeremiah wrote to them and gave them the 70 years so that they would be aware of the time that they would be returning from their captivity. And they were then to seek the Lord with all of their heart that God would be found of them.

I think the time has come where we really need to just seek the Lord with all of our hearts. And we will find that God will be ministering to us and giving us wisdom and guidance as to what he would have us to do in these last days. The last opportunities of sharing his word and his love with our world.

Let's pray. Father we thank you for the warnings and we thank you for the signs. And Lord as we see the signs of your coming all around us help us to pay attention to your warnings.

That we should watch and be ready. That we should not be so taken up with the cares of this life. That the day would catch us unprepared.

But Lord may our hearts be toward you and toward your work. Toward the things that you desire of us. So that when you come Lord you find us so doing your will.

Help us Lord to diligently do your will. In Jesus name, Amen.

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