

Jeremiah 29:10–14

¹⁰ For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

¹¹ For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

¹² Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.

¹³ And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

¹⁴ I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

“Wanted: God Seekers” **Jeremiah 29:10-14**

INTRO:

Our LORD God wants us to do many things. For example, we know He wants us to love Him with all of our hearts, souls, and strength. We also know He commands us to love our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We know He wants us to seek to win the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. But did you know that God wants us to seek Him?

We are supposed to become a God seeker. I have gone to church for years and I have never heard anyone say that I needed to seek God. It may surprise you to learn that the Bible says a lot about our need to seek God. Let me show you what I mean in **Jeremiah 29:10-14**. Jeremiah the Prophet wrote **chapter 29** as a letter to the first group that had been taken captive to Babylon. The LORD communicated through Jeremiah His plan for the future of Judah and a promise about when they would return to the land.

I. GOD'S PLAN (v. 10, 11)

II. GOD'S PROMISE (v. 12-14)

I. GOD'S PLAN (v. 10-11)

“For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Jeremiah 29:10-11

A. Among the first wave of captives carried off to Babylon, there were a few false prophets. No sooner had they hit Babylon, than the false prophets began to prophesy that this

captivity would be short and that God would very soon restore them to the land. This was not to be.

B. In **verses 5-9** the Lord told these captives through Jeremiah to settle down in the land, build homes and to pray for the welfare of Babylonia.

“Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon: Build houses and dwell in them; plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished.” Jeremiah 29:4-6

1. We can learn a lesson from this exhortation. We should pray for the welfare of our nation. We are not to condone her sin, but we are to pray for our leaders that we might serve God now.

2. **1 Timothy 2:1-3** ***“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior.”***

C. The second thing they needed to do was to recognize that God had a plan for them. This plan is laid out in **verses 10, 11**.

“For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.”

1. Now how were they supposed to act knowing that God had a plan? Some folks see the fact that God is sovereign over the affairs of humankind as an incentive to laziness. We don't need to work and pray because God already has determined what He will do.

2. But this has never been the response of God's choicest servants. Remember how Daniel the prophet responded after he discovered the record of God's plan? We read about it in **Daniel 9:2-3**.

“In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years specified by the word of the LORD through Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.”

Daniel thought the fact that God had a plan and already knew what He would do meant he should pray even more that God would carry out His plan!

D. Not only did God have a plan, He also made them a great promise.

II. GOD'S PROMISE (v. 12-14)

A. ***“Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you.”***

The blessing of this promise is not readily apparent to us, because in this New Testament age we are very aware of God's many promises to always hear our prayers. But this was very special to these Jewish believers because God had long before quit hearing and answering prayer in Judah because of the evil of their hearts.

1. One of the most disturbing passages of Scripture in Jeremiah is found in **Jeremiah 14:11-12**.

“Then the LORD said to me, ‘Do not pray for this people, for their good. When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.’”

Can you imagine praying for someone and the Lord telling you, “Don’t pray for them anymore. I am going to destroy them.” What would you do if God said to you, “I will not hear your prayers anymore?”

2. Why would He not hear their prayers? He told them through another prophet. **Isaiah 59:1, 2**

“Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

3. Sin still keeps us from God today. We can pray and not be heard, if we are unwilling to part company with our sin. Let us recommit ourselves to keeping short accounts with God.

B. If you had heard about God's command to Jeremiah in **chapter 14** to stop praying, this promise was indeed good news. When they got back to the land, they would once again, know the joy of having their prayers answered. But the promise gets even more detailed.

“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.”

Isn't praying the same as seeking the Lord's face? Yes and no. God here is promising even more than just the answer to prayer. He is promising a relationship with them. How important is it that we are God seekers?

1. Seeking God is important because God judges those who refuse to seek Him. One of the great indictments God handed down against His people in the Minor Prophets was that they did not seek Him. **Zephaniah 1:6**

“Those who have turned back from following the LORD, and have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him.”

2. Seeking God is important because, if we do not seek Him, we will tend toward evil. We see this in a comment in **2 Chronicles 12:14** about Solomon's son, Rehoboam.

“And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.”

3. Seeking God is important because it demonstrates our relationship with the Lord.

Those who belong to the Lord and love Him, seek Him. Those, who do not know Him, do not seek Him. **Romans 3:11**

“There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.”

4. Seeking God is important because it is the key to greatness in God's sight. There are two kings in the divided kingdom period whom God called great, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah. What did these two kings have in common? They both prepared their hearts to seek God.

C. How do we become God seekers?

1. Seeking God first requires we humble ourselves. **2 Chronicles 7:14**

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

One reason why we find it difficult to seek the Lord is because we are prone to trust in ourselves or in others to do what needs to be done, rather than humbling ourselves before God

2. Seeking God means we need to prepare our hearts. We read about Jehoshaphat in **2 Chronicles 19:3**

"Nevertheless good things are found in you, in that you have removed the wooden images from the land, and have prepared your heart to seek God."

How do we prepare our hearts to seek God? First, we must humble ourselves and recognize our need of the Lord. Second, we deal with our sins. Then we must determine we will be obedient to all that the LORD shows us to do.

3. Seeking God means seeking Him in prayer and in His word. Daniel sought the Lord in prayer after reading of His promises in **Daniel 9:3**

"Then I set my face toward the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes."

We also seek the Lord in His Word. We read of Ezra this tremendous statement in **Ezra 7:10**.

"For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel."

If you are a teacher of the Bible here is a great verse for you. We must prepare our hearts. Seek what God would say to us in the Word. Obey His word in our lives, and then, last of all, teach it to others.

All of this comes down to one basic question. Are we God seekers? Do we spend time each day preparing our hearts, humbling ourselves, and seeking the face of our Lord in prayer and in the Word of God? I love the statement in **Psalms 27:8** ***"When You said, 'Seek My face,' My heart said to You, 'Your face, Lord, I will seek.'"*** If we do this, the Bible promises that He will be found by us. Then we will discover the truth of **Hebrews 11:6** ***"But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."***

Hymn# 382 Be Thou My Vision