

## W160\_The\_Purpose\_Of\_The\_Ages.mp3

[00:00:01] This is a recording made in the chapel of the opened book. Under the covering title, The Christian Fundamentals The Subsection. The testimony to the inspiration of Scripture. And this evening we are considering the bearing upon this question on the the inspiration of Scripture by looking at the purpose of the ages, at least in outline. It is our custom at this meeting to read together some portion of Scripture. And those of you who are listening to this recording, if you care to join us, will you switch off for a little while and read together with us? Ephesians chapter two, starting from verse 11 and reading through to the end of Chapter three. Ephesians two, starting with verse 11 and the whole of chapter three. We are still considering in this series. Certain studies lines of thought that bear upon the question is this book authoritative? Is this book inspired by God? What are its credentials that we can bring, as it were, to the person who is an inquirer? And we looked at in passing at an earlier study, the testimony of prophecy. That God has committed himself. Hundreds. Thousand years before the time to make statements in Old Testament that either are fulfilled or are about to be fulfilled. Which if they were to collapse and fail, would bring down the whole edifice. But we saw enough to make us sure that the fact that he has fulfilled so many. And so faithfully is a guarantee that the rest will all fall due in their own time and way.

[00:02:07] Now, there is a statement in the Old Testament which says that a three fold cord is not soon broken. I pose. It's a proverb that was in perhaps common use like we have. Unity is strength. And yet there's something about it which is suggestive because there is a three fold cord. They all begin with the three letters p, r, o, and the first one is purpose. Oh, you say you slipped up properly this evening because we don't spell purpose with P-r-o. No, that's our ignorance, friends that the Greeks do. There are three words. Purpose, promise and prophecy. Our purpose with a pro in front of it is a scheme, a plan, a device placed before the mind of the person. That's his plan. Then we have promise because it's one thing to have a plan. And so another thing to put it into execution or to say that you are going to. So God took into his favor certain men at different times. And to them he unfolded features in that plan and they took the form of promises. He swore by an oath that he would do this or that or the other at certain times. Price. And then seeing he's the god of the ages. And he doesn't need instruction

and he can do something which passes our understanding. He can foretell what free agents.

[00:03:53] When we say free agents, it's always with limitations. Of course we can't be. None of us are absolutely free. But he can see what free agents will do without in any measure infringing or infringing their rights. And that is that is prophecy. So we've got these three strands twined together. This evening. I want to use this rather ancient manuscript. Is that ancient? Well, it's not been used very much. And if you are acquainted with the printed testimony of this work, you will know that it is there at the end of Dispensational truth. And I can see myself at this very moment getting over another operation that I had to go through, being entertained by a friend who kept a dairy down at Sunningdale, standing at the desk till I couldn't stand any more, and then going lying on the grass because the one thing the doctor said, I mustn't sit down any time for a period. And it was in that period that I wrote most of Dispensational truth and schemed out this outline at the back. Well, a great a great amount of water has passed under the bridges since this first attempt was made to visualize the outworking of the purpose of the ages. And there may be, as we go through it, small incidental details that would perhaps do with a little check over. But in the large, I think it's still possible.

[00:05:33] So if as you were going through it this evening, or those of you who are listening to this and have the chart in front of you can rectify it, well, do it in a spirit of meekness. And thank God that your eyes have been opened even more than they were in the beginning when we first put pen to paper. Now, the first thing is. What do we do about it? Or subject? How do we begin? Well, obviously, there's only one place to begin, isn't there? And that is the first verse of the Scriptures. Well worn, well known to us. But here we start. This verse contains a tremendous amount in it. I don't know whether we shall ever be able to get back to the book and give it a little more personal and systematic attention. I'm simply always in the wholesale department and very seldom able to get down to the retail. But here we have in the first verse of Genesis, a verse all to itself. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. It's so simple. That we don't realize what a tremendous thing it is to be able to put down such a great amount in such a small campus and in such wonderfully simple terms. I suppose you know that in the Hebrew of this verse there are seven words employed and there are 14 syllables and there are 28 letters and 2 or 3 of the key words like create and so on are multiples of seven and so on.

[00:07:28] Or it starts off properly with that stamp upon it. And then you do remember. That the now see I've got against that primal creation the world that then was. What? I borrowed that from the epistle of Peter. But I've come to see that Peter is referring particularly in his epistles to the flood. He speaks about the cataclysm of the flood. He speaks about Noah and the Ark. And possibly he is giving a limited view of this bigger one. We are not losing anything. We are gaining because a great deal that takes place in the large outside is concentrated in the history of Israel so that we can learn the lesson by looking at the smaller pattern and then go out and see the bigger like if you were a bit fogged over the word. Adam Well, have a look at the word Abraham. He's the father of the One Nation. Adam was the father of the whole of the world, you see, and so on. That's what I mean. So we'll leave it as it stands that it still can refer back to the world. That then was the primal creation. But when you really get down to things. First of all, you're sure that when it says in the beginning, it means the beginning of time. But if you'd approached it from another angle and read the last book in the Bible first, you see, as some do, then you could you could say, Oh, no, no.

[00:09:04] It says there in Revelation, chapter three that Christ is the beginning of the creation of God. So you see, what we could do is to divide our chaplain up into two parts and you'll be the Genesis one, then you'll be the revelation 314 And we make a denomination of difference straight away. But that isn't the way to treat the Bible. The Bible is to say we want both statements. It's a note of time, but it's not only a note of time. There was a person involved. Oh, dear. We shan't get through the purpose of the ages like this. Shall we be the first verse? But this word in the beginning is the word translated in the book of Leviticus the First Fruits. The first groups. So something was done at the beginning that was foreshadowing something that was going to be done at the end. That's because God had a purpose in view all the time. Everybody didn't know it. And when he made part of it known there were other parts of us still in his own heart. As we know, when we get to the period called the mystery. So we mustn't be surprised to discover right early in the book foreshadowings and glimpses of that which we've only just woke up to see, let alone whether it was ever seen by the patriarchs, Abraham and David and others.

[00:10:23] Well, there we start with the beginning, and you run your eye right down to the end, of course, and you anticipate in the end of the book of the revelation, which

balances Genesis. We have the new heaven and the new earth, which is the beginning of a period that runs right on until a last enemy that is destroyed is death. And the sun hands up a perfected kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all. And you can sum up the last line of this chart with one Corinthians 15. Then cometh the end when God shall be all in all. You could also say at the beginning of this chart that is God is all. And when you get to the end of it, God is all in all. The one is a creation that cannot turn around and argue with God. And the other is a creation that did turn around and argue with God, but now lovingly and joyfully bows the knee and acknowledges that he is king of kings and Lord of Lords, the only Savior and so on. You see, that is the purpose or one of the summaries of the purpose. And we find our place in it. Well, now that the the Book of Genesis immediately breaks at verse two to indicate that it wasn't a straight forward movement, as most of us know, I don't want to spend too much time on that, which we've considered so many times before.

[00:11:59] But for the sake of any who may not be sure, would you look at verse two of Genesis one? And immediately I draw your attention to the fact that that little word was in verse two is printed in two different types in your Bible. That is if you're using the authorized version. Two different types. And the printers got job enough, believe me, to print a book like this, like the Bible, without adding to his misery by having to have all these different types checked over. Yet he's done it. So that surely it's up to us to ask the question. Why go to that trouble? And the answer is this, that although in the spoken language of Hebrew, you use the verb to be say he is or he was. Yet there is no word that is written. It's assumed. And when it is written, it sounds a bit Irish when it is written. It isn't the verb to be at all. It's the verb to become. And an illustration of it is waiting for it. In chapter two, verse seven. And man became a living soul. He wasn't a living soul until that moment. It became so. So we say in the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth became without form and void.

[00:13:28] And darkness was upon the face of the deep. Well, now we have to search a bit. And we discover in many passages of Scripture that there was an angelic rebellion and an angelic fall at some time. We may not be able to turn to chapter and verse and find a date, but it looks back to the past. I think I'll just give you one as a sample without taking time over this. That's the epistle of Jude Almost at the end of the New Testament. The Epistle of Jude remarks not only about Sodom and Gomorrah and. Others of that caliber, but says in verse six, and the Angels, which kept not their first estate but left

their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. And there's other things in Jude that would give you a sorry connection with some of the things that they associated with those angels that fell. So there it looks as though we have something that lies back behind human history. In the measure. You can say that man has never known peace. The first men for a brief period lived in paradise. But he forfeited it. And not one of his children were born inside the garden. They were born outside. And not one of them escaped that ban. They all had to be redeemed if ever they were going to be brought back to God.

[00:15:13] We were a fallen people. But also we must remember that there is a battle going on which is quite above and beyond the mere human instrument. Take, for instance, in Genesis three, it says, Now the serpent. Now the serpent was more. Well, where's he come from? The serpent is most certainly Satan, because in the last book of the Bible, which balances the first, it says more than once that ancient serpent, which is called the Devil New Testament and Satan. Old Testament. That gives you the two names in the two languages and says it's all the same person. Well, now, that old serpent could never have been a part of the creation that God looked upon and said it was very good. He belong to this other creation that had fallen. And how is a problem? If you'd like to make it one. Why should God have permitted this rebel to have even existed? Why didn't he block him out immediately? Would you go on saying those wise until the end of time and you'll be no wiser? If I may play on the word, but you'll be much wiser if you say, Well, we are in it, whether we can always spare them and understand it's another matter. And it amounts to this phrase that you and I and those who have gone before us and those who will follow us for some time yet are living in a battlefield.

[00:16:46] We may not always see the bombs dropping. There may be some periods when we say peace and safety, but the battle is on and the human element is a very small element in comparison. It's the hosts of Darkness Against the Powers of Light. It's evil against good, it's Satan against Christ. And they're are sure to be casualties on the way. It doesn't always follow that a person in this life is smitten by some overwhelming calamity that he is worse than somebody else. It's just what happens on a battlefield. But isn't it good to know that a day is coming when all the inequalities shall be smoothed away and an explanation of it's necessary will be given by God Himself when he wipes away all tears. So we've got now the primal creation and Satan's first rebellion with the overthrow of the world. And at the bottom we have under the corresponding letter B

Satan's final rebellion, because that's what we get in the book of the Revelation Chapter 20. We are told that for a thousand years, Satan is kept in prison. We don't know how Satan can be kept in prison, but that's God's affair and he's not liberated until the thousand years are finished. When he is liberated, he goes out once more and immediately following after a thousand years responds. But they are dealt with summarily and Satan is disposed of at the finish.

[00:18:20] Nothing more said about him so far as the Scriptures are concerned. That's his last rebellion. So now we get to the beginning of the end of the story. Now we come to the earth. So far as we ourselves are concerned. Do you remember when you're speaking in the some of these poor, perplexed and harassed children that have gone through their examinations and now are being taught not only reading, writing and jacinta's, but some of the other more abstruse things. They're worried. Some of them are perplexed. They thought the Bible was true till their scientific teacher began to gibe at it. The scientific teacher says you can't possibly believe a book of Genesis. You can't possibly believe that this present world and all that's in it was made just 6000 years ago. And of course, if you've got any knowledge, whatever of any of the scientists that sciences doesn't matter which one it is, you can't do that. But the Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible teaches that 6000 years ago. That's only yesterday. So far as time is concerned, God restored an earth that had been overwhelmed, restored it, and prepared a garden in it, and put a man that had never been made like him before. Of all the man like creatures that had been dug out of the earth and left their marks in tombs and graves and pictures on cavern walls. Not one of them give any evidence that he was created in the image and likeness of God.

[00:19:56] Adam's the one with which the Bible starts, and Adam's the one with whom you start. Now, of course, if you're that sort of person that says, No, I'm never going to be saved, I'm never going to have my sins forgiven, I'm never going to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ until I've swotted up all geology, all astronomy, all the other ologies, poor wretch will be dead and buried and forgotten before you get halfway through. And the Bible will have passed you by. Fancy demanding that, Moses. If he was inspired by God, should have started and written a treatise. That would have satisfied modern science. Well, it was it was asking something that was foolish. Moses was a leader raised up by God to take a nation of slaves out of the misery of brickmaking and bondage. And what would they know about a treatise on zoology or geology or any

other ology? The only one that they ought to be concerned about was Soteriology. Never heard of that, friends. That's the word salvation. That's a good ology to get on with and that's what the Bible is about. The rest of it doesn't count. But he was going to lead that people out of Egypt to the foot of Mount Sinai and at Mount Sinai, they were going to enter into a covenant with God. And a part of the covenant was they were going to keep a special day.

[00:21:24] Holy that people were. And that was the Sabbath day. For in six days, it says in the Ten Commandments. So they go back to Genesis one and they say, Oh, that's what Moses meant. There it is. That's what it needs. So we don't look upon the first chapter of Genesis as teaching us that God created the universe 6000 years ago. He restored the earth and made it fit for man. That particular man, 6000 years ago.

Because the first act in the great drama of redemption was now about to be commenced. You notice in verse nine of chapter one and God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together into one place and let the dry land appear. He doesn't say, I'll create the dry land, let it appear. And it was so it was under the water all the time. But it was now It got ready for man. So we call these now still borrowing the language of Peter, the heavens and the earth, which are now. I think you will find when you come down to the parallel, the earth restored and blessed that the epistle to the Hebrews uses an expression which is useful, help helpful to us. It says in Chapter four. As Hebrews. Or it's summing up about me keeping the the seventh day and using the seventh day and so on.

[00:23:07] Quite a number of verses. The seventh day in chapter four. It sums it up in verse nine. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. And that word rest is a Sabbath is boss. Well, of course you can hear it, can't you? It's that particular type of rest which is envisaged in the Sabbath. So we've got now the inauguration of the Sabbath. In six days, the Lord occupied in getting the earth ready for man. He purposely refrained because he doesn't mean to say that the great creator himself was so tired. At the end of a week he had to have a weekend off. He simply rested, typically on purpose that it should be a halt to cold. And then we begin to see that here we have a panorama of the ages, the 6000 years which have now passed. We are within sight of the end of the 6000 years. We are almost through to the end of God's working week. Just a few more ticks of the clock, prophetic clock and the working week will have finished and the Sabbath will be commenced. That's what that's what we're waiting for now. One day is

is is likened by the scriptures to a period of a thousand years. That is the millennial kingdom. It says in about five times over in one chapter, in case you didn't notice it, that it's a thousand years. A thousand years.

[00:24:43] What if one day is a thousand years in the scheme of typology? Well, the rest of it ought to follow, didn't it? Well, then it makes just 6000 years from the present time. Within a little bit. That's got to run out to when Adam first was put upon the earth. And this 6000 years of work followed by 1000 of rest, brings the whole thing to a conclusion. Then we go on into the new heavens and the new earth and the sun. Summing it all up and the final presentation of it to the Father that God may be all in all. Well, now let's come a little bit closer. We have the entry of Satan. With Paradise Lost, Genesis three. I think I can appeal to scriptures like that, too. You can't, I? Yes. And then we've come down here. We have Satan bound and paradise restored, albeit, you may say doesn't say paradise, and it doesn't say restored. I know it doesn't. But listen to these words in Revelation 22. And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb. And in the midst of the street of it and on either side of the river was there. The tree of life, which bare 12 manner of fruits and yielded her fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

[00:26:09] The tree of life in the midst of the garden. That's what we get in Genesis. That's what we get in Revelation. The one foreshadowing the other. In the one case Satan enters. In the other case, Satan is excluded or bound. Well, then we get the whole of mankind. First of all, descended from Adam. And the first part of Genesis deals with them from the birth of Cain until the building of the Tower of Babel. And there's a great deal of evil let loose in those brief chapters, as you may well know. When you get further down, you find mankind comes into view. There is a suggestion that when the Lord returns in Matthew 25, he's not only going to take into judgment his own redeemed people or the nation of Israel, but is going to gather all nations before him and test them and try them with regard to their entry or non entry into the kingdom, which is about to be set up. And so we get that balance. But let's come a little bit closer now because our time is running out again. I did intend to have given you a longer preface than I've done this evening, dealing with the fact that in Ephesians three we have in the authorised version the eternal purpose, whereas most of you know it should

read the purpose of the ages. But I should have been so long ages dealing with the word that we shouldn't have started at all.

[00:27:50] So I've let that slip, and I think the only thing we can do is to say, Well, we'll have to make it a subject to itself one of these evenings. So we'll just leave that unexplained that this is the purpose of the ages. That's the word on the top lifted out of the epistle to the Ephesians, although there it is translated the eternal purpose, the purpose of the ages. There is a purpose in these ages. However, strangely, it seems to sometimes diverge from the straight path. A river is running to the sea all the time, but sometimes it seems to turn back and point in the opposite direction. But it's still going. Friends, It gets there. You know, there's a song that says he gets there just the same. Well, there's a truth in that. And so it is with this purpose of the ages. It may twist and turn, but it's going all the time irresistibly. Nothing can stop it. So now we have we've come to the the point letter F where Abraham comes into view. Now when Abraham comes into view, we've reached halfway through the Old Testament. Well, you say, Where's that Isaiah? Oh, no. Chapter 12 of Genesis. Chapter 12 of Genesis? Yes. Come from Genesis one to verse to Chapter 11 is just the same length of time as from Genesis 12 to the end of the Old Testament.

[00:29:17] So you see, if God has written a book and he gives you 11 chapters for one period of 2000 years and he gives you far more than 11 books for the same period, you can tell that the people who are now going to be spoken about are a very important people. And if you shut your eyes to the dominance and presence of the people of Israel in the Bible, well then you lose a key. So that one would you get here? A chosen nation. We get Abraham, the father of the great nation, and then the rest of the world is only included in the Bible if it comes into contact with this people. The chief thing now is to pursue this line down from Abraham through Judah, Through David to Christ. And is the most perfect genealogy given right through the book till it gets there. Then it stops. We can't give you a perfect genealogy or or a chronology in the New Testament because it doesn't matter. Christ has come. That's already fulfilled. Well, then we have again a repetition of what took place in the lodge, although there was this chosen people and God, the guarantee. Then we had Israel's failure. Israel's failure. Non repentance. Disobedience. Until there came a moment when they were scattered all over the earth in judgment. But before that. We read of the first advent of Christ and the opening words of Mark's Gospel are the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[00:31:02] The time is fulfilled. That was his opening words. The time is fulfilled. And so we start with the first Advent. We get the four gospels giving four facets of the one great work, and then it's followed by the Acts of the Apostles, with Paul's early ministry leading right down to the frontier and in Israel are set aside at Acts 28. In 1870, which is a few years afterwards, the city of Jerusalem was destroyed, the temple was destroyed. Israel scattered all over the earth and they've been low army. Not my people, blinded and persecuted all that time. But what's God been doing in the interval? In the interval, the letter I in the very center brings us to where we come in. And that's why we read Ephesians two and three that we being Gentiles without any claim upon God, hopeless quietness, without covenant, without association, known no place in the Commonwealth of Israel. Yet God is revealed that he had a purpose and he included us. He didn't reveal what that purpose was. It was kept secret because he had an enemy in view. And if you don't tell your enemy all your plans, you would expect to be defeated. And God didn't. That's why you discover a mystery nearly always indicates some evil is in the background, and God now is working against that evil and using that method.

[00:32:36] And Paul, who was the apostle and traveled different places, covered miles. Of course, the distance in miles is nothing when you consider what people do today. But then the facilities for traveling were very different. He was a tremendous traveler in his own day was the apostle until God set him apart to receive the present dispensation, and he called him the prisoner of Jesus Christ. What a strange thing for the man who was going to have such a liberating message. To lose his liberty. But the apostle Paul, I suppose, had got so used to the fact that God doesn't always explain all his ways, just whatever was the will of the Lord. He accepted it. And in that prison and through that prison ministry, he made known to us the high calling, which with which we associate the epistle to the Ephesians and the Colossians and Philippians. Well, then after that is over, that hope realized, which is summed up in the opening verses of Colossians Chapter three, that when Christ, who is our life shall be made manifest, that we shall be manifest with him in glory. After that is over, then we have the second time, the second Advent. You remember there's more than one instance where in type and shadow, the time of deliverance was not the first time. The second time when Stephen stood up to speak to his own people as recorded in the seventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, he gave a sort of a run over quickly of their own history.

[00:34:23] The same as a person might do if he were speaking to a congregation in this country. He may say, Well, you know, 1066 William the Conqueror, we all know that and go on from that to something else. But Stephen starts with the people in Egypt coming out, and then he focused his attention upon. Joseph. And then it goes on again. And he focuses attention upon Moses. And those two stand out with this thought that in both cases, Joseph and Moses were, first of all rejected by their brethren. And a second time this Moses, whom they rejected the same, became a deliverer. And the second time Joseph was made known unto his brethren. And Hebrews says for those that wait for him the second time, he will be manifested unto salvation. So there's a second time. The Lord is now at the right hand seated, but from henceforth he's expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, and then he will come and pick up the threads and carry this forward. Well, now, the point that I'm trying to make is not so much to prove to you every incident that's recorded even on this manmade chart. The general trend of it, I believe, is true. The incidental details may have to be revised and altered in their order of action.

[00:35:55] And when I've done a revised version of this chart, they'll be just about time to start another one, because not one of us will ever be able to say, Well, that's that. But what I do feel is this, that surely, if it's possible, if it's possible to prove that there is such a pattern in the Word of God, if it does start like it does in Genesis one, and if it does end like it does in Revelation 22, and if all the other interspersed things that took place, various nations that come in the coming of Christ himself and all these other features, if they all fall into their place, surely you're not going to say, Oh, it's just a matter of chance, it's just a matter of haphazard. There's too much of it. It's too mighty a thing. It's too wonderful. And then I would suggest that it would be a most convincing thing if instead of merely taking an outline like this at second hand from somebody else, I don't say you go through an operation and have to stand and not be able to sit down and all that sort of thing like I did. That's not the only way to devise these things, you know, lands, I suppose, and could poke fun at that. But if you were to take the Bible and begin yourself to track it down, if you yourself said, Now how does it start and how does it end? And what is the very middle of it and what are the differences of the steps that lead to it and the steps that lead away from it? And yet what is this balancing factor that shows that all the time, whether it be human failure, whether it be national failure or individual, or whether it be the most triumphant success that you could imagine as it is with regard to the victory of Christ.

[00:37:43] He says it's all in its right place. There's nothing out of place. It takes you step by step through. So we begin with the words of Genesis one in beginning. There's no word in the original in beginning God did that. Then they got all in between. Then cometh the end and God will do that. And blessed are they who by his mercy will be there in that day to form, in form that glorious company. Who will then willingly and out of a heart, touched as never before, bow in the presence of him, and say, Worthy is the lamb that was slain. Or, as Philippians two puts it, that every knee shall bow and every tongue confess then that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God, the Father. So I leave it with you. Not that I pretend to have proved that this analysis is correct, but to challenge anyone with regard to the statement.

[00:38:52] How do we know the Bible is true? I say you read it, you search it as in the presence of God and you'll discover that it is the unfolding record of a purpose. And a purpose implies a person and a person with power and with wisdom and with all it's necessary to achieve such a mighty end. So may the Lord use this further opportunity we've taken this evening of manifesting some of the many evidences that we have already at our hand to answer the question How do you know the Bible is true? Well, I think we can say here we have then this threefold cord. We pursue prophecy. We pursue the promises. We pursue the purpose. And we say, here we have a three fold cord not soon broken. He had a purpose. That was his wisdom. He made promises. That's because he's going to faithfully carry it out. And then. He also committed himself in prophecy to tell you what was going to happen. Hundreds of years before the time came. And if those three are not sufficient to prove to any intelligent person that God has spoken, I think it would be wise to go on to the next man because he may be more responsive. So may the Lord give us grace to be thankful that He is not left himself without witness, and that the Word of God, if allowed to speak, speaks with no uncertain sound.