



Having a Purpose

by Scott Huckaby

key verse: Ephesians 2:10

Note: The Scripture references in these Sermon Notes are taken from the New King James Version.

Key Reference:

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Why We're Here

I'd like to start by asking a rhetorical question... Do you know why you're here? I'm not just talking about why you are here at this worship service, I'm talking about what your purpose is in life. All people wonder about this at some point in their lives.

Of course the conventional wisdom is that life has no purpose. Today, most people are stumbling through life without any purpose. If evolution is true and we are the product of blind, random natural processes then life can have no purpose. But deep down in their heart of hearts, all people know this rationalization is false and there has to be a purpose for our being here.

The Bible tells us why we are here. It says we are here to prepare for eternity. The Bible describes life as a test to show who will enter into an eternal, personal relationship with their Creator and who will not.

Before anyone can accept the message of the Bible, they need to first see it as truly being from God. So my purpose in the few minutes I have before you today is to help you to better appreciate the supernatural nature of the Bible.

God's Word versus Man's Word

What a person thinks of the Bible really comes down to what they think of God. If God is just some impersonal force that set everything in motion and kicked back to watch what happens, then the Bible is merely a record of man's search for God.

There are many who call themselves Christians who have this view of God. They view Christianity as basically a cultural thing. They do not recognize the deity of Christ,

nor do they believe He was born of a virgin, nor was He resurrected.

There is a term for people who believe in God but do not believe that God interferes with the laws of the universe: they are called deists. They consider the Bible to be just a collection of human moral teachings and the history of people seeking after God.

Deists do not recognize the God of the Bible and are really not Christians at all. They do not believe that God supernaturally intervenes in the affairs of people or that He has revealed Himself to us. Those who do not believe the fundamentals of the Christian faith are making a grave mistake thinking they are saved.

On the other side of the coin... if God is truly Almighty and desires a personal relationship with each of us as He claims, then the Bible is the world's premier source of truth. The Bible is what God gave us so that we may know Him. If the Bible is true, then this includes the prophecies that make up about 25% of it...

The Accuracy of Prophecy

2 Peter 1:21 says, "*for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*" And we know from Hebrews 6:18 that, "*it is impossible for God to lie.*"

God foretells the future in the Bible with 100% accuracy because He is outside the confines of time... He said in Isaiah 46:9-10 - *Remember the former things of old, for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure.'*

It is hard for our mortal minds to comprehend how God can declare "*the end from the beginning*" but nonetheless this is what He does. In physics, time is considered the fourth dimension after the three dimensions of width, height, and depth. We can certainly accept that God created our physical universe that has width, height, and depth. God created the world for us so that we would have a context for our lives. Time is just another extension of the world God created for us. Time also provides a context for our lives.

God is omnipresent, meaning He is every where, “*upholding all things by the word of His power*” (as it says in Hebrews 1:3). And as it says in Colossians 1:17, “*He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*” But God is not part of His creation as religions such as the Hindus and New Agers teach. The Creator God is not a part of His creation, so He is not limited to it. This is why God can declare “*the end from the beginning,*” because He is not constrained by time as we are.

Fulfilled Prophecy

Let me give you some examples of Bible prophecies that have been fulfilled...

How many of you have seen the movie, *The Passion of the Christ*? You should see it, this movie shows in graphic detail what happened but it could have done a better job explaining why it happened: God, in the Person of Jesus the Messiah came into our world to pay the penalty for the sins of those who trust in Him.

Crucifixion was invented by the Persians used by the Greeks but perfected by the Romans. 500 years before crucifixion was even invented, King David of Israel was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write about how the coming Messiah would die...

Psalm 22:14-18 says, “*I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; you have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.*”

This prophecy was fulfilled about a thousand years after it was written when Jesus died on the cross. In fact, all the details were literally fulfilled... Matthew 27:35 says, “*Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet.*”

Psalm 16:10 prophesied that the Messiah would be resurrected from the dead, “*For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*” And indeed that is what happened. Matthew 28:6 comments on the empty tomb of Jesus saying, “*He is not here; for He is risen.*”

It was prophesied that the Messiah would be miraculously born of a virgin:

Isaiah 7:14 - *Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel.*

This verse even speaks of the deity of the Messiah because the name Immanuel means, God with us per Matthew 1:23. The testimony of Mary, Joseph, Luke and others in the New Testament verify that Jesus was in fact born of a virgin. As the angel of the Lord told Joseph:

Matthew 1:20 – “*do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.*”

It was prophesied that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem:

Micah 5:2 - *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."*

It is even clear from this verse that the Messiah would in fact be God because it says, “*whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.*” Only God has been around since eternity past.

It is amazing how God orchestrated events to make sure his prophecies would be fulfilled. Joseph and Mary were from Galilee, they had to travel a great distance so that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem:

Luke 2:1-4 - *And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David.*

Cesar Augustus had no idea that it was God who inspired him to decree that a census be taken. God used this census to fulfill a prophecy that helped to authenticate that Jesus is the Messiah.

I could go on and on, there are over 100 other prophecies about the Messiah, and all of these were fulfilled in Jesus.

Now some have dismissed prophecies as having been fulfilled by rationalizing that over time people changed Scripture to what they wanted it to say. But this ignores the fact that the Hebrew scribes regarded Scripture as sacred and destroyed a scroll if even one transcription error was found.

Prophecies Being Fulfilled

If you are not convinced of the supernatural nature of the Bible from the prophecies that have been fulfilled, maybe those that are being fulfilled in our lifetime will change your mind. This is what convinced me. God opened my heart to Him after talking to wife Teresa about the current events of the day and how they related to Bible prophecy...

At the end of 1989, the Soviet Union allowed the Berlin Wall to be dismantled. This event amazed and mystified me because I was an ex-Cold Warrior who had been an officer in a nuclear-capable field artillery battalion. We had lived, ate, and breathed the Soviet nuclear threat so I had expected the nuclear stand-off between the U.S. and the Soviets to go on indefinitely.

But a book my father-in-law had given me on Bible prophecy helped me to understand why the Soviet Union had to fall. The Bible says that when the Messiah returns, the world will be united under one government.

Daniel Chapter 2 describes a dream God gave King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon about a great statue made of different materials. The Hebrew prophet Daniel was the only one who could interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream: the statue represented all the world governments until the coming of the Messiah's kingdom on earth...

- **Gold Head - Babylonians** - in power 605 to 539 BC, took Israel into captivity as God's judgment for turning away from Him
- **Silver Arms - Medeo-Persians** - in power 539 to 330 BC, allowed Israel to rebuild the Temple and return to Jerusalem
- **Bronze Body - Greeks** - Alexander the Great came in power 330 to ~250 BC, provided a common language to conduct trade and share ideas.
- **Iron Legs - Romans** - added Israel to its empire in 68 BC, they built roads to improve transportation, communication, and trade ("command & control"). The Roman empire broke into nations 450 to 900 AD.
- **Iron & Clay Feet – Revived Roman Empire** – this is the future world government that will have similarities with the original Roman government (hence the iron) and be led by the one we refer to as the Antichrist.

The government of Iron & Clay will be the last human world government...

Daniel 2:44 - "And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever.

Many have rationalized that this is merely talking about a spiritual kingdom. This is partially true because God has indeed set up a spiritual kingdom. But this spiritual kingdom foreshadows the physical kingdom to come. It is important to note that all of the prophecies about the first coming of the Messiah were literally fulfilled, so we should expect the prophecies about His return to be literally fulfilled as well.

There have been no world governments since the Romans, many have tried but it hasn't happened since then. One might say the Roman empire continued to rule the world through the European colonial system. In 1945 at Yalta, Stalin & Roosevelt decided to break up the colonial system and these empires further fragmented into nations. But all of governments of Western Civilization have drawn heavily from the Roman government. The principles of pluralism regarding religion, democracy, and free trade all came from the Roman form of government. There are so many similarities that event the architecture of our official buildings in Washing D.C. are Roman.

Daniel 2 indicates that the government of Iron & Clay will be in power when the Messiah returns... With this background from Daniel Chapter 2, it became clear to me that the super-power stand-off had to dissolve to make room for a world government to emerge.

My Conversion

Then it hit me, if the Bible could help me understand why current events happened the way they did, then it also had to be right about the need for Jesus Christ in my life. I was suddenly gripped by fear, I was a sinner in God's eyes and destined for hell if I did not yield to Him and allow Jesus to come into my life.

Responding to the Lord was a no-brainer. It was like a light going on in my head. I knew at that instant my life would be forever changed. I was born again. I did not fully understand the implications of this but I knew the greatest event in my life happened at that moment.

The Lord Reinforced My Faith

I didn't immediately tell Teresa about this monumental development in my life because I was embarrassed that I had represented myself to be a Christian to her when I wasn't. I was raised in the Methodist church so I knew enough about how appear like a Christian. But it wasn't long before I matured enough in the faith to realize that holding on to my façade was just pride.

The Lord convicted me to be baptized and join Brazos Bend Baptist Church near my home. Among the most fantastic things that happened soon after God converted me to Him was in the way He answered my many questions about my faith. I put James 1:5 to the test which says, *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”*

God answered my prayers in amazing ways. I could be listening to a sermon where the pastor used a Bible verse that was on an entirely different subject but answered the question that I had. This still happens today, but God usually answers my question by helping me to recall a passage of Scripture with which I am already familiar. However, it was a fresh new experience in the early days of my faith that powerfully reinforced that my relationship with God was more than just imagined.

Discovering More Prophecies Being Fulfilled

One of the things the Lord gave me was a hunger to learn His Word. Soon after He opened my heart to Him, I started digging into what else the Bible had to say about God’s purpose and plan for us.

In the course of my investigation, I discovered even more evidence that Bible prophecies are being fulfilled in our day. The most significant of these involve the nation of Israel. The Bible has many prophecies that Israel will return to their homeland in the time-frame prior to the return of the Messiah. For example Ezekiel 36:24 says, *“I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land.”*

We know this is not talking about Israel returning from captivity in Babylon because it is talking about a regathering from *“all countries.”* This is pretty incredible when you consider that Israel ceased to be a nation in 70 A.D. being dispersed throughout the nations of the world then became a nation again in 1948.

In the 1800+ years of the Hebrew Diaspora, the language of the Jews had gone the way of Latin and disappeared as a spoken language. It was all but lost except for Biblical scholars. Even by the time Jesus came on the scene, Hebrew had pretty much been relegated to the synagogues. Aramaic was the common language on the street and Greek was the official language of commerce in Israel. The Jews had even translated the Old Testament into Greek between 300-200 BC. This translation is called the Septuagint.

Since the Diaspora began in 70 A.D. Hebrew became further fragmented being combined with the languages wherever the Jews settled. The Hebrew language had been corrupted with other languages such as Ladino which is a combination of Hebrew and Spanish or Yiddish which is as a combination of German and Hebrew.

But the 20th Century has seen a restoration of the Hebrew language. Zephania Elineazer Ben Yahoda dedicated his life to the pure Hebrew language inventing thousands of new words based on Hebrew root words. Now a pure form of Hebrew is the language that binds Israelis together despite their coming from different nations. Israelis can now read original biblical scrolls without translation. You can not even say the same thing about English, Old English is almost unintelligible to us today. In 1982 Hebrew became the official language of Israel.

The restoration of the Hebrew language is a fulfillment of prophecy...

*Zephaniah 3:8-9 - Therefore wait for Me,” says the LORD, “Until the day I rise up for plunder; my determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all my fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will **restore** to the peoples a **pure** language, that they all may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one accord.*

In context, this verse is talking about a common language for all peoples that the Lord will enable us to have during His millennial reign on earth. God will reverse the confusion of multiple languages that occurred as a consequence of the rebellion against Him at the Tower of Babel. It is common for prophecies to be fulfilled in type before the actual fulfillment takes place. I believe that the restoration of the Hebrew language is a foreshadowing of the pure language that will be restored to all people when Jesus reigns on earth.

Certainly, what we have seen happen with the Hebrew language is unprecedented in history, lost languages do not just re-emerge.

And look at the prophecy in Zechariah 12:3 which says: *“it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all peoples.”* In context this is referring to the time-frame prior to the return of the Messiah. Jerusalem is always in the news today because it is at the original epicenter of the world war on terrorism and the most difficult nut to crack in terms of world peace. The conventional wisdom is that if mankind can bring peace to the Mid-East, there is nothing preventing peace worldwide.

Of course the peace that the nations seek after is just a cessation of hostilities that has nothing to do with the true peace that comes from knowing God. But the nations will not even see a cessation of hostilities until the Prince of Peace returns to set up His Millennial Kingdom as He said He would in Revelation Chapter 20.

While we're in Zechariah, consider Zechariah 12:5...

Zechariah 12:5 - And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.'

The use of the word governors here indicates that in the time-frame prior to the return of the Messiah, Israel would be governed by a democracy rather than a monarchy as they were in times before their dispersion. Today, they are the only true democracy in the Mid-East. The jury is still out on Iraq. In fact this prophecy also says that the governors of Israel will be secular people, notice that the governors refer to the Lord of Hosts being "*their God*."

Zechariah 12:6 says that in the time-frame prior to the return of the Messiah, Israel would be victorious in battle against all countries coming against them...

Zechariah 12:6 - In that day I will make the governors of Judah like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place - Jerusalem.

We have certainly seen this in the four wars Israel has had since their inception in 1948 ('56, '67, '73, '81). Israeli forces have astounded the world by their victories with vastly superior forces opposing them. Today they are the most powerful force in the region and currently the only nation with nuclear weapons. Israel's military forces have been rated at 3rd or 4th in the world but in terms of their effectiveness they are probably number one.

Check These Things Out for Yourself

There are also prophecies being fulfilled today in society, technology, world religions, and world politics. I'm out of time so I'll have to share these with you later. I hope that you can now better appreciate the supernatural nature of the Bible. God is in control and He will fulfill all the prophecies He has given us in His Word.

God has revealed His plan and purpose to us because He desires a personal relationship with us. Those He saves, He saves for a purpose...

Ephesians 2:10 - For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

I guarantee that knowing you're here to prepare for eternity will change your life for the better.

I'd encourage you to check these things out for yourself. Don't just take what I've said as the way things are. You should verify them as the Bereans checked up on Paul in Acts 17:11. My understanding of the Scripture passages I've shared with you today is from studying their context and harmonizing them with the rest of the Bible. You may need to do this as well to fully embrace what the Holy Spirit has to say to you about these prophecies. If you want to review the things I've been talking about today, my sermon notes are archived on my website: BibleTract.org.

Invitation

We're going to wrap-up today's worship service with an invitation. If you are being convicted by the Holy Spirit that you need to repent of your sin, this invitation is your best opportunity to be saved. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 6:2, "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*"

Making a public profession of your faith is essential for salvation...

Romans 10:9-10 - if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

If you are under conviction by the Holy Spirit to make a public profession of your faith, I'd urge you to do so before it is too late...

Proverbs 29:1 - He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

If you have never made a public profession of faith, I invite you to come. Or maybe you're ready to become a member of this church... if so, I invite you to come. What ever decision you'd like to make public today, I invite you to come right now...