

Lesson Six – “History: Whose Story?”

Introduction

History provides us with indispensable insights into the meaning of existence and God’s plan and purpose for the ages. God is absolutely in control, and history is His story. The details of our lives are mere threads in the great tapestry of His overarching plan.

Hence we are enjoined to “remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other” (Isaiah 46:9). If we do not recall what He has done, we run the risk of becoming myopic, proud, and clueless when we try to put our lives in perspective.

Quote Unquote

What did they say? Fill in the blanks as you watch this presentation.

1. In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, ...having undertaken for the glory of God, and _____ of the _____, ...a voyage to plant the first colony... –Mayflower Compact
2. If you can rewrite the _____, you can make people believe whatever you want in the _____. –Del Tackett
3. He who _____ the past, _____ the future. –George Orwell
4. We have a tendency to _____ the things we’re supposed to _____, and to _____ the things we’re supposed to _____. –Del Tackett
5. If you don’t have a certain knowledge of history, then you can’t understand anything about the _____. –Theodore Dalrymple
6. Those who don’t know history have no sense of _____ and no sense of _____ as they explore where they’re gonna go. Without history, we’re lost. –Os Guinness
7. Be careful that you do not _____ the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. –Deuteronomy 8:11
8. The _____ of the LORD stand firm forever, the _____ of his heart through all generations. –Psalm 33:11
9. Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodern as incredulity towards _____. –Jean-Francois Lyotard

Notes or Questions

While watching the video, use this space to record your thoughts, any facts you want to remember, questions that arise, etc.

*“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other.”
Isaiah 46:9*

TRUTH 1 – History Matters

Knowing what happened in the past helps us understand the present and then act accordingly.

1. What would you do if you woke up tomorrow morning and couldn't remember anything about your past? Really try to imagine having amnesia. How important is your personal history?
2. How would you rate your knowledge of history in general? Of Western civilization? In what ways might a better understanding of the past help you in life?
3. Which sources of historical information appeal to you most? Books? Video documentaries? Biography? Historical fiction? Letters? Other original documents?

TRUTH 2 – Time to Rewrite?

Revising history and casting doubt on God’s Word are old tactics of those who oppose us.

1. What book, textbook, or video documentary do you know about that seems to rewrite a part of history? How best can you alert others to all the misinformation out there?
2. Why do you think the Bible’s historical accuracy is always being challenged? Have those attacks in any way diminished your confidence in Scripture? What do we know about the formation of the Bible that should give you great comfort?

TRUTH 3 – Join in God’s Story

Life is not about us but about God’s sovereign plan for redeeming mankind. We should remember His past actions and participate in His grand purpose.

1. Whether out loud or in writing, try telling the entire story of the Bible, from beginning to end, in your own words. If you find that too difficult, which parts of “salvation history” do you need to brush up on?
2. How would you rate your knowledge of what God has done through His people in the centuries that followed Jesus’ time on earth? How would you like to improve your understanding of church history? How would that be helpful?
3. Are we living out mostly our own stories, or are we participating in God’s larger story? What might that mean in practical terms? What is He calling us to do?

Wrap-Up

From beginning to end, Dr. Tackett’s message in this tour is that “it’s not all about you.” As Jesus put it, “He who seeks to save his life will lose it.” If, instead, life is all about God, we need to know what He has been up to over the millennia.

But according to Os Guinness, “Many Christians have an abominable view of the past”-- meaning that they don’t grasp the importance of knowing what has gone before. Is this a weakness in your life? Are you living out of context? Few things matter more than becoming part of God’s larger story.

What is What?

Here's an exercise to try on your own. Draw a line from each term in the first column to its definition in the second column. Terms are found in the lecture or at mytruthproject.org.

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| 1. Metanarrative | a. Reinterpreting the past to change views of the present |
| 2. Historical revisionism | b. Philosophy or worldview that seeks to explain reality |
| 3. Natural myopia | c. Sweeping plan to bring out God's eternal purposes |
| 4. Paradoxical | d. Having supreme authority or power |
| 5. Sovereign | e. Governor of Plymouth Colony |
| 6. Larger story of God | f. Governor of Judea in first century A.D. |
| 7. Free agents | g. Seemingly absurd or contradictory but possibly true |
| 8. William Bradford | h. Wisdom, guidance, and control provided by God |
| 9. Pontius Pilate | i. Individuals who make independent choices |
| 10. Providence | j. Focusing on our own life, ignoring larger world |

Check It Out

For your reference and further review, here are some of the key Scripture passages that were mentioned in the video you just watched.

Joshua 4:1-7
Numbers 15:38-39
Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:4-12; 8:10-20
Psalm 33:10-11
Isaiah 46:8-11
Matthew 28:11-15
Ephesians 1:11