



## Lesson Guide

### Lesson 6 - History: Whose Story?

#### Introduction

The word “remember” is central to the message of episode 6. On this tour we will set up the fourth and final pillar in the Temple of Truth – *History* – and take a close look at the importance of maintaining a firm grip on the past. In the process, we will see that a proper appreciation of *historical context* – in other words, our place in God’s “larger story” – is fundamental to an accurate understanding of almost every aspect of our lives. History provides us with indispensable insights into the meaning of existence, God’s plan and purpose for the ages, man’s responsibility toward the Creator, and his duty toward his fellow creatures.

#### Themes

Dr. Tackett’s key scripture passage for this discussion is Isaiah 46:9-11: “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 ... Indeed, I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass ...” Two major thoughts arise from these verses. First, God is *sovereign*, or absolutely *in control*. History is in the most literal sense *His* story. Nothing happens at random or by chance. The hairs of our heads are numbered, and the details of our lives are threads in the great tapestry of His overarching providential plan. Second, we as human beings cannot understand our place in the world without cultivating a vision of ourselves as part of this larger story. This is why the Bible contains so many exhortations to “remember” what God has done in the past, whether through the device of “memorial stones,” annual festivals, tassels, phylacteries, or the discipline of hiding His Word in our hearts. If we do *not* remember, we run the risk of becoming myopic, proud, self-sufficient, and eventually incurring our own destruction (see Deuteronomy 8) – not necessarily *physical* destruction, but rather a complete loss of identity, purpose, and meaning, or what Amos refers to as a “famine of hearing the Word of the Lord” (Amos 8:11).

Here too we come face to face with the implications of man’s fallen nature and encounter yet another manifestation of the *Cosmic Battle*. Man resists the idea of a sovereign God. He wants to control his own destiny, live inside his own “little story,” and free himself from all connections with or references to an all-inclusive divine plan. Thus he devises ways to propagate the “pernicious lie” of self-determination (“I am my own god,” or “I believe in myself”) by taking the larger story of history into his own hands and turning it into a powerful *tool* for the manipulation of other people and the accomplishment of his own selfish purposes. *Historical revisionism*, or the agenda-driven re-writing of history, operates on the basis of the premise, “If I can change your historical context, I can determine the way you view the present.” This strategy is consistent with George Orwell’s observation that “He who controls the past controls the future” and Karl Marx’s dictum, “A people without a heritage are easily persuaded.”

*Postmodernism* – the contemporary philosophical perspective that rejects both *revelation* and *reason* – takes this process to an extreme conclusion by denying the validity of all

comprehensive truth systems, or what it calls *metanarratives* (including Christianity). Stated simply, the postmodern perspective maintains that there *is* no “larger story.” Instead, everyone must tell his or her *own* story and invent (if possible) his or her *own* concept of meaning and significance. In other words, history does not exist at all except as it exists in our own minds, where it can be edited and tailored to further our own goals in the present.

### **Points to Watch For**

As we have seen so often during the course of our first five tours, the essence of the *Cosmic Battle* or the conflict between Truth and Lies can be boiled down to a confrontation between the claims of the sovereign God and the claims of the sovereign self. It’s the old story of the Garden of Eden, where the serpent re-wrote the past by asking, “Has God really said ...?” and where man became completely caught up in his own “little story.” From beginning to end, Dr. Tackett’s message in episode 6 is that “It’s *not* all about *you*.” As Jesus put it, “He who seeks to save his life will lose it.” Given our current “self-actualizing” cultural climate, it is likely that some group participants will take exception to this idea. Others may have theological objections to Dr. Tackett’s statements about the relationship between God’s sovereignty and human free will; for he states very plainly that if we are *only* free agents, then we are completely without hope.

### **Discussion Questions**

- 1) **What did you see as the key points in this tour? Did any of these strike home with you? Why?**
- 2) **What are the consequences of believing the line: “It is all about me”—that my script is the only script that really matters?**
- 3) **Contrast the “stepping stones” outlook of the Pilgrims with our modern self-centered, solve-it-now mentality?**
- 4) **Reduced to simplest terms, what is the basic difference between the biblical understanding of history and the human-centered *revisionist* view?**
- 5) **Why do you suppose so many students are bored by the study of history? How is this boredom related (if at all) to the overarching theme of this tour?**
- 6) **Os Guinness suggests that our sense of *identity* is directly related to our grasp of history. What role did this concept of *identity* play in the experience of the Pilgrims of Plymouth Plantation? How do we as members of contemporary society compare with them in this regard?**
- 7) **What is the point of the story Dr. Tackett relates from 1 Kings 22 regarding King Ahab and the prophet Micaiah? How does this narrative fit in with God’s declaration about Himself in Isaiah 46:9-11? How does it relate (if at all) to the problem of *historical revisionism*?**
- 8) **What is the connection between this discussion of history and the concept of *universals* and *particulars* that we encountered in Lesson 2?**



## Outline

### Lesson 6 – History: Whose Story?

- I. Introduction – Why is History important?
  - A. Gazing upon the face of God
    - 1. Isaiah 46 – “Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God...My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please...what I have planned, that will I do.”
    - 2. Galatians 4:4-5 – “But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son...”
  - B. History Quiz – The significance of 911 and 9/11 – What you believe in the present is determined by your past - History, in this context, becomes extremely critical
- II. Historical Revisionism – The danger and power of it!
  - A. Rigoberta Menchu – Professor: “Whether her book is true or not, I don’t care” – “what is important is getting students to believe what we want in the present”
  - B. Revising the Mayflower Compact – God is being left out of contemporary academia
  - C. Power of Historical Revisionism – “If you rewrite the past, you can make people believe whatever you want in the present”
    - 1. Lies about History are not new
      - a. In the garden - “Did God really say?”
      - b. The resurrection – “His disciples stole the body” – Matthew 28:11-15
    - 2. Veracity of Scripture – Dating and number of historical manuscripts
- III. God’s Mandate to Remember
  - A. Memorial Stones – Joshua 4:1-7

- B. Tassels – Numbers 15:38-39, Deuteronomy 22:12
  - C. Feasts – Ex. Passover – Exodus 12:24-27, Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:4-12
  - D. Deuteronomy 8:10-20 – “Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God...”
- IV. Battle over History
- A. Nature of the Battle – Ultimately it is against the nature of God – 2 Corinthians 10:3
  - B. God’s Sovereign Rule – His providential plan and sovereign control for mankind
    1. Acts 4:27-28 – To do whatever your plan had predestined to take place
    2. 1 Kings 22:28-34 – Story of Ahab and the “random arrow”
  - C. Postmodernism & Cultural rejection of metanarratives – “There is no larger story”
- V. The Larger Story
- A. Del’s Photo Album – Many little stories that weave together the story of life
  - B. Natural Myopia – Nearsightedness – We lose sight of the larger story of God
  - C. God’s Photo Album – People who were caught up in the grand story of God
  - D. Pilgrim’s Providential View of History – “They cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations...even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.”
  - E. A people who are caught up in their own little story will never be willing to lay themselves down as stepping stones for others



## Key Terms

### Lesson 6 – History: Whose Story?

**Cocoon:** Part of the worldview transformation process that Dr. Tackett describes: In order for a caterpillar to transform into a beautiful butterfly, it must undergo a struggle within a cocoon. Similarly, it is often a deep struggle to apply God's truth claims to the reality of our beliefs and circumstances; Del refers to this long and arduous process as "the cocoon" or a "cocoon experience."

**Covenant:** A formal and legally binding agreement. Biblically speaking, a covenant can be conditional or unconditional and can be established between God and an individual or group of individuals (such as a nation) or between men. Theologians list several such covenants including the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants.

**Ex nihilo:** From or out of nothing. Del is using this term in the context of knowledge; we know 11 is representative of the number eleven based on past teaching, we don't recognize that this is an eleven "ex nihilo," without some historical context.

**Free agents:** The human nature of free will, allowing individuals to make decisions, as opposed to behaviorism, where man is merely a stimulus-response mechanism.

**Historical revisionism:** a process where history is altered or the past is reinterpreted in order to accomplish a particular agenda or objective. If you rewrite the past, you can make people believe whatever you want in the present. There is a large liberal agenda to rewrite history in order to leave Christian themes and God out of public academia.

**Incredulity/Incredulous:** Unable or unwilling to believe; skeptical.

**Metanarrative:** An over-arching story, philosophy or worldview that seeks to explain reality. Postmodernism denies the credibility of any metanarrative.

**Myopia:** Nearsightedness; the condition which the human eye cannot see distant objects clearly.

**Natural Myopia:** A sickness we all suffer from, where we have a tendency to see our own little story very well, but we lose sight of the larger story of God.

*Of Plymouth Plantation*: The most complete story of the Pilgrims and the early years of the colony they founded. Composed of journal writings by William Bradford recounting the *Mayflower* voyage and their settlement in early America.

**Paradox**: A statement, proposition, or situation that seems to be absurd or contradictory, but in fact may be true; something that is contrary to or in conflict with conventional or common opinion.

**Passover Feast**: Instituted so that the Israelites would remember God's deliverance from the Egyptians. Most feasts were instituted by God to help His people remember a particular event when God worked in a powerful way. Exodus 12:24-27, Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:4-12

**Pontius Pilate**: The prefect (governor) of the Roman province of Judea from 26 AD until 36 or 37 AD during the reign of emperor Tiberius Caesar. As prefect, he was responsible for the estates in Tiberius, collecting taxes and maintaining order. Pilate is most commonly known for ordering the crucifixion of Jesus.

**Providence/Providential**: wisdom, guidance, and control provided by God; involving divine insight or intervention.

**Sovereign**: Having supreme authority or power. In the context of God's role in history, He is in ultimate control, fulfilling His purpose, and carrying out His plan.

**Stepping Stones**: People who are lost in the larger story of God; "they [the Pilgrims] cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations ... even though they would be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work."

**The Larger Story of God**: Del uses this phrase to describe God's grand story in which He is sovereignly in control. God's people should be focused on living as part of God's story instead of their own little story.

**William Bradford** (1590-1657): The leader of the Pilgrim settlers and Governor of Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. He was a signer and the primary architect of the Mayflower Compact and author of the writings that formed *Of Plymouth Plantation*. He is also credited for the very first Thanksgiving.