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?
WHOSE STORY IS THIS?

“Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. From the east I summon a bird of prey; from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose. What I have said, that will I bring about; what I have planned, that will I do.”

Isaiah 46:9-11

GOD’S PLAN UNFOLDING

But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Galatians 4:4-5 (NAS)

GALATIANS 4:4

the plan of God unfolding...
the promise of God fulfilled...

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*Mayflower Compact, The* (1620). November 11.

*Mayflower Compact, The* (1620). November 11.
**The Context of History**

If I can change your historical context, I can change the way you view the present.

This is the power of historical revisionism.

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**This is not new...**

Lies about history:

- Creation
- Jesus’ life
- Jesus’ death
- Jesus’ resurrection
- Matthew 28:11-16
- 1 Corinthians 15:14-19

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**Lies About History**

Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened.

Matthew 28:11-16 (NKJV)

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**Lies About History**

When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, “Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’”

Matthew 28:11-16 (NKJV)

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**Lies About History**

And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.” So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

Matthew 28:11-16 (NKJV)
New Testament

do you believe in Plato?

Ancient works and their oldest manuscripts:
- Homer's Iliad: 500 yrs
- Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars: 1,000 yrs
- Pliny's History: 750 yrs
- Thucydides' History: 1,300 yrs
- Herodotus' History: 1,300 yrs
- New Testament: 25 yrs

Veracity of God's Word

Number of early manuscripts:
- Homer's Iliad: 643
- Julius Caesar's Gallic Wars: 10
- Pliny's History: 7
- Thucydides' History: 8
- Herodotus' History: 8
- New Testament: >24,000

Veracity of God's Word


George Orwell

"He who controls the past, controls the future."

Karl Marx

"A people without a heritage are easily persuaded."

Memorial Stones

Joshua 4:1-7

How did they do?

Judges 2:6-15


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God’s Mandate to Remember

Other Memorial Stones

Tassels
Numbers 15:38-39, Deuteronomy 22:12

Passover
Exodus 12:24-27, Deuteronomy 4:9, Deuteronomy 6:4-12, & more...

remembering what we should forget

Our Problem
forgetting what we should remember

Os Guiness

"Those who don’t know history have no sense of identity, and no sense of wisdom as they explore where they’re going to go.

Without History we’re lost."

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the LORD your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied...

Deuteronomy 8:10-20

...then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today...

Deuteronomy 8:10-20
If you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. Like the nations the LORD destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the LORD your God.

Deuteronomy 8:10-20

The Battle Against The Nature of God

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

2 Corinthians 10:3-4

The Battle Against The Nature of God

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:5

Providence at Work

The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.

Psalm 33:10-11

Providence at Work

...for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.

Acts 4:27-28 (ESV)

A “metanarrative” is any “large story” that pretends to give an all-encompassing explanation of anything, especially an over-arching story of history and life in attempt to legitimize some version of truth.
“But these things did not dismay them (though they did sometimes trouble them) for their desires were set on the ways of God, and to enjoy His ordinances; but they rested on His Providence and knew whom they had believed.”

William Bradford, Of Plymouth Plantation
“Last and not least, they [the Pilgrims] cherished a great hope and inward zeal of laying good foundations, or at least of making some way towards it, for the propagation and advance of the gospel of the kingdom of Christ in the remote parts of the world, even though they should be but stepping stones to others in the performance of so great a work.”

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
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 recognized 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 loose 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 thought 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.
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Recommended Reading
Lesson 6 – History: Whose Story?

Please note that not everything in these suggested resources should be considered endorsed by Focus on the Family. Nevertheless, Dr. Tackett has found this material helpful. Scripture should be your first and primary resource.