

## History - History's Designed Purpose

### Philosophy Statement:

Biblically Integrative History: Human history has a beginning and an end, a purpose, an ultimate destination. History does not "repeat itself." Though similar occurrences may be chronicled, God's ultimate plan for the world is Jesus' established, physical kingdom on Earth. God personally plans and oversees all the affairs of men. Nothing happens outside of God's design or purpose. All things are done for God's glory. God ordains the rise and fall of rulers and nations. The personal, eternal Creator is in control of the smallest detail to the greatest event. Though the flow of history may sometimes be a human mystery, all events are sovereignly interrelated.

### Biblical Foundations:

1. Christianity is one of the few world religions dependent upon historical corroboration for its claims (e.g., John 1:1-18; 14:8, 9; 21:30; 1 Corinthians 15:1-3; 2 Peter 1:16-18).
2. The Egyptian and Babylonian views of "time" emphasized a cyclical or circular view of history, leaving people at the mercy of *perceived* impersonal, whimsical, supernatural forces. The Hebrews, on the other hand believed in the personal, eternal creator giving folks meaning, potential, fulfillment, and a goal in life. Each day is a new choice, opportunity, and responsibility with something and Someone to live for (Ecclesiastes 5:18-20).
3. History teaches us about God's character (Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Psalm 77:10-12; 143:5).
4. God controls the rise and fall of nations and rulers (Job 12:23; Proverbs 8:15-16; 21:1; Jeremiah 46:50; Daniel 7).
5. Life lived apart from God is ultimately meaningless (Ecclesiastes "vanity," "under the sun"). However, God also uses unbelievers to accomplish His purposes (Psalm 76:10; Isaiah 44:28-45:1).
6. God's judgment against nations and individuals is so that they will know He Is Lord (Ezekiel 25-39). Note the repeated refrain: "Then they will know that I am the Lord"; Daniel 4:19-37).
7. Work is meaningful not monotonous when understood as a gift of God.
8. History is a record. Man's records include the bias of the recorder. Compare Ecclesiastes 2:17-23 with 2:24-26, noting that the latter contains a God-centered perspective.
9. Historical interpretation is susceptible to subjectivity and bias. History should be based on verifiable primary source material rather than on latter secondary interpretation that may have been "reshaped" to fit a particular worldview. The Christian philosophy of history holds as its focal point the literal and physical incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. God's Son came to earth in real space and time (2 Peter 1:16-18; 1 John 1:1-3).

### Understandings / Attitudes / Outcomes:

1. My life has purpose because there is purpose in God's world.
2. History is not just a subject to be studied but a mindset to be lived. We should always be aware that history gives meaning to the understanding of all other subjects.
3. Since all works contain the author's bias, I must be conscious of their bias when reading their works.
4. I should evaluate all works through the lens of Scripture.
5. I should rely on original verifiable documents to interpret history rather than on someone else's interpretation of those documents.
6. God uses all situations in my life to teach me and to direct me to glorify Him.

### Activities / Ideas / Questions:

1. Interpreting Events: Looking back on events in my lifetime, can I see purposes that were unknown to me at that moment? How can I think differently about what happens around me every day when I consider how God is working in His world? What does a study of history do for a person living anywhere, at any time in the world? Explain. Create a class newspaper that interacts with current events from a Christian point of view.
2. Important People: How does God use individuals to accomplish His plan? Entitle a unit "For Such a Time as This" based on Mordecai's statement in Esther 4:14. Research people, events, or decisions that affected history, showing God's control.
3. Key Places: Why do archaeologists "dig up" the past? Discovering the purposes of people groups helps us to understand their view of life. Elementary through high school students would enjoy a pseudo-dig where the teacher has hidden various pieces of "history" underground so that the science of archaeology could be understood and appreciated for its Christian importance.
4. Great Ideas: For instance, does "good" ever come out of "evil?" Story is the way people communicate belief and history. Duty is placed within the bounds of God's law. Freedom grants opportunity to do what is right, not to do whatever we want. Freedom is tied to responsibility. Good ultimately triumphs over evil.
5. Important Documents: How can historical records be affected by the worldview of the recorder? History is told or written from the viewpoint of an observer and therefore is stamped with his views and bias. How do textbooks communicate the purpose of humans or God (if He is mentioned)? What does the word "prehistoric" communicate? Is that a Christian concept?