



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 (Pick 3 or 4 for your discussion time.)

(Make these questions your own. That is, don't just "read" them, but become familiar with them so that they don't appear as simply an item to get through. Go through them yourself before your group meets and ponder them.)

1) Opening question. This may be the only question you need to ask.

- A. Ask your guests to list what they saw on the tour. Here are some of the key items: What you believe in the present is based upon the past; power of historical revisionism; this is not new: lies about Jesus' resurrection; veracity of God's Word; comparison of the earliest dates of ancient documents like the Iliad to the New Testament; comparison of the number of manuscripts; God's mandate to remember (memorial stones); we remember what we should forget and forget what we should remember; the Providence and Sovereignty of God; the random arrow that killed Ahab; antinomies and paradoxes; postmodern's denial of the metanarrative; the Larger Story; natural myopia; Elisha's servant; God's Photo album; the Pilgrims; stepping stones.
- B. Ask your guests to point out the ones that were particularly interesting or striking to them and why.
- C. Ask if this particular area struck anyone else as well.

D. Ask if there were other items that they saw that stood out to them. (You may want to read back through the list if you need to.)

2) What are the consequences of believing the line: “It is all about me”—that my script is the only script that really matters?

(Continual frustration—everyone else will be trying to make their script the ultimate script and they will constantly be stepping on yours. Your concern for others will become totally selfish. In other words, “how can your script enhance mine?”)

3) Contrast the “stepping stones” outlook of the Pilgrims with our modern self-centered, solve-it-now mentality?

(Never lay yourself down for those behind you if it is all about you own little story; won’t believe that a small step in the right direction is worth taking; won’t realize that it took years for our culture to sink to where it is and it will take years, maybe generations, to get it back.)

4) Reduced to simplest terms, what is the basic difference between the biblical understanding of history and the human-centered *revisionist* view?

(The Bible sees past events as having *objective reality* in themselves; the *revisionist* perspective sees all reality as being primarily *subjective* in nature – i.e., it exists in our minds and can be shaped, molded, and manipulated at will.)

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?

(Some may be bored simply because they’ve had boring teachers. But the fundamental issue is that they fail to see themselves as part of the “larger story.” They need to have their eyes opened to take in the broad sweep of God’s activity in history and how their “small story” fits into the overall plan.)

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?

(The Pilgrims obviously had a very clear concept of their place in God’s sovereign plan. As a result, they were able to stand firm in the face of hardship and suffering. We today seem to have a far more tenuous grasp on our identity, both as individuals and as a people. As a result, many of our contemporaries seem to be “lost” and engaged in a frantic and misdirected search for purpose and meaning.)

- 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*?**

(The entire story turns upon the phrase, "A certain man drew a bow at random ..." [verse 34]. The point is that, under the sovereign control of God, nothing happens "at random." As the Lord says in Isaiah 46, "I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass." Our destinies are in *His* hands, and we cannot change this no matter how we try to "fiddle" with the past by re-writing history to fit in with our own plans.)

- 8) **What is the connection between this discussion of history and the concept of *universals* and *particulars* that we encountered in Lesson 2?**

(History as *God's Story* provides the *universal* reference point against which we can begin to interpret the significance of our own *particular* stories; but the attempt to extract *universal* meaning from the *particulars* of our own narrow experience is futile – just as the scientific endeavor to construct a comprehensive understanding of the cosmos on the basis of the "stuff in the box" is doomed to failure.)

remember all the commands
 remember the LORD your God
 remember that you were

TIME & HISTORY
whose Story?

1000 BC 30 BC 1 AD 93 AD

1

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

2

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)

3

remember all the commands
 remember the LORD your God
 remember that you were

GALATIANS 4:4
 the **plan** of God unfolding...
 the **promise** of God fulfilled...

1000 BC 30 BC 1 AD 93 AD

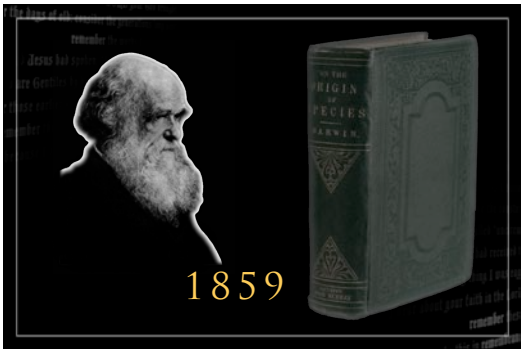
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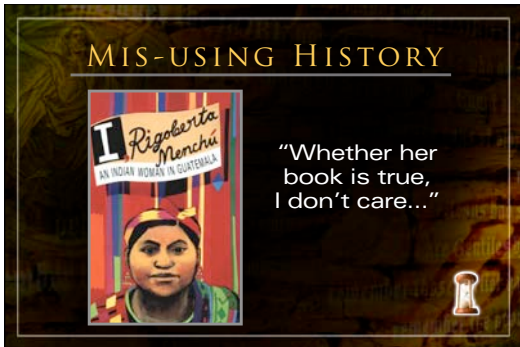
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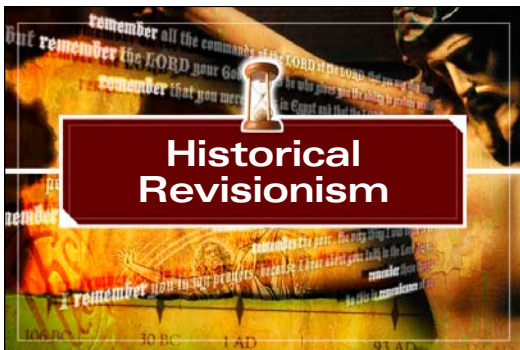


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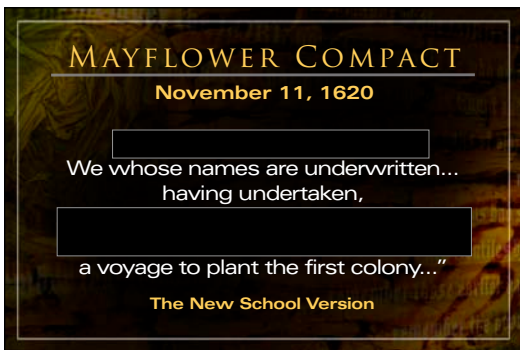


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Agosin, Marjorie (1999). Cited in Robin Wilson, Anthropologist challenges veracity of multicultural icon. *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Online).

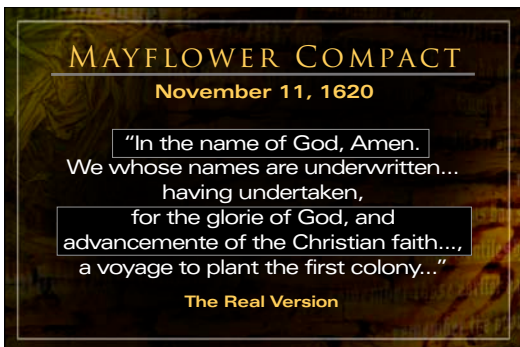


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Mayflower Compact, The (1620). November 11.




15

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



16

THIS IS NOT NEW...

lies about history:

- creation
- Jesus' life
- fall
- Jesus' death
- Jesus' resurrection
 - Matthew 28:11-15
 - 1 Corinthians 15:14-19




17

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 28:11-15 (NKJV)




18

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 28:11-15 (NKJV)




19

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 28:11-15 (NKJV)




20

VERACITY OF GOD'S WORD

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




McDowell, Josh. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1972, p. 42-43.

21

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



McDowell, Josh. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. San Bernadino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, 1972, p. 42-43.

22

HISTORICAL POWER

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

George Orwell




Orwell, George (1949). *1984*. London: Everyman's Library, pt. 1, ch. 3.

23

HISTORICAL POWER

"A people without a heritage are easily persuaded."

Karl Marx



24

God's Mandate to Remember

Memorial Stones
Joshua 4:1-7

How did they do?
Judges 2:6-15



25

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...

26

remembering
what we should forget

OUR PROBLEM

forgetting what we should
remember

27

OS
GUINNESS

"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."

28

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

29

...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

30

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


31

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




32

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



33

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.

Psalms 33:10-11

34

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)

35

remember all the commands
But remember the LORD your God
remember that you were
remember the LORD your God
remember that you were
remember the LORD your God
remember that you were

1 KINGS 22:28-34
Ahab & the
Sovereignty of God

36

ANTINOMY & PARADOX

first - last

weak - strong see - yet blind

rich - yet poor alive - yet dead

to live - must die

37

The Providential View of History

God's Providence

God's Sovereign Rule

Eph 1:11
Isa 46:10-11
Prov 16:9-10
Acts 17:24-26

Creation

Birth of Christ

Today

Fulfillment

Time

38

JEAN-FRANCOIS LYOTARD

"Simplifying to the extreme,
I define postmodern as
incredulity towards
metanarratives."

39

Lyotard, Jean-Francois (1984). (G. Bennington & B. Massumi, Trans.). *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, p. xxiv.

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.

40

THE BATTLE OVER HISTORY

Truth Reality VS **Lie Illusion**

history is His Story Providence no meta-narrative history is a tool

41

the Larger story

42

43

44

45



46

THE LARGER STORY

natural **myopia**

Elisha's servant (2 Kings 6:8-18)

God's **photo** album

The Fall Sorcerer Simon

The Saints
(Hebrews 11) The Pilgrims

47

remember all the commands of the LORD your God
remember the LORD your God
remember that you were slaves in Egypt
remember the LORD your God
remember that you were slaves in Egypt
remember the LORD your God
remember that you were slaves in Egypt

Stepping stones

1000 BC 1 AD 1000 AD

48



49

Ferris, J. L. G. (1907). *Return of the Mayflower*. Unknown gallery portrait.

THE PILGRIM'S PROVIDENTIAL VIEW OF HISTORY

"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

50

Bradford, William (1909). Cited in Valerian Paget, *Bradford: History of the Plymouth settlement Rendered into modern English*. New York, NY: John McBrick Co.



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.



Scripture References
Lesson 6 – History: Whose Story?

Isa 46:9-11

Jud 2:6-15

Deut 4:9

Hosea 13:6

1 King 22:28-34

Acts 17:24-26

Matt 28:11-15

Num 15:38-39

Deut 6:4-12

2 Cor 10:3-4, 5

Eph 1:11

2 King 6:8-18

1 Cor 15:14-19

Deut 22:12

1 Cor 13

Psa 33:10-11

Isa 46:8-11

Josh 4:1-7

Ex 12:24-27

Deut 8:10-20

Acts 4:27-28

Prov 16:9-10



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.

- McDowell, Josh. 1979. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers.
- McDowell, Josh. 1975. *More Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers.
- Sproul, R. C. 1977. *Knowing Scripture*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.