

STUDY PACK 1

A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

“When one thoroughly considers the matter, it is from history, as from a living fountain, that have flowed all laws, sciences, counsel, warning, threatening, comfort, strength, instruction, foresight, knowledge, wisdom, and all virtues; that is to say, history is nothing else than a . . . Monument of divine works and judgments, showing how God maintains, governs, hinders, advances, punishes, and honors people, as each one has deserved good and evil. And although there are many who do not recognize and regard God, yet they must take warning from history.”
~ Martin Luther ~

I. THE DEFINITION OF HISTORY

History has been defined as _____ History includes more than simply the recording of events; it includes the interpretation of those events at a later time and often from several points of view. There is generally a different focus on any event by first-hand observers than by those who view it from a historical standpoint at a later time.

II. THE HISTORICAL METHOD

The approach to the study of past events is often referred to as _____. The historical method includes the study of sources of information, including _____. An example of material remains might include tools, dishes, jewelry, furniture, or any other item that would be preserved from any particular historical period. Oral traditions include legends and folk tales. Cave walls and pictures engraved on art objects or in architecture are samples of pictorial data. The written records would include letters, copies of business transactions, legal documents, and any other written material from the historical period being studied.

The historical method also includes the study or analyzing of suggested evidence to ensure that it is consistent with all of the known facts.

The final step in the historical method is that _____. This involves weighing all sources and evidence to make sure that any conclusion is based on sufficient and valid information.

III. DIFFERENT VIEWS OF HISTORY

Throughout the centuries, men have taken different views of the interpretation of history. In each of these basic interpretations one aspect of man’s condition or behavior is seen as the most important factor in determining what happens to man.

There is the “_____” which says that man’s history is determined by the basic forms of government that men chose to live under.

The “_____” which says that man’s history is determined by the geographic conditions (mountains, rivers, valleys, etc.) he finds in his environment.

The “_____” states that man’s history is determined by the kind of economic system that men live under. Communism, as taught by Karl Marx, is based upon this theory: So is socialism.

The “_____” states that man’s history is determined by the kinds of leaders that men follow.

The “_____” states that history is determined by the ideas that men choose to believe in. “History is philosophy teaching by example,” Bolingbroke.

There is also what people have referred to as the “_____” of history. Ford is reported to have said, “History is bunk and the study of it is a waste of time.”

No one can dispute that governments, geography, economic systems, leadership, and ideas are important in man’s development. But the Christian has an entirely different insight to history — one that makes the record of history come together and make sense.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY

Man’s history is determined _____. How man reacts to the _____ by God, _____ through Christ Jesus determines man’s condition and development.