

## Why Should I Be Interested in Church History? Pt. 1 (2022.05.15 Sabbath School class)

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“Why Should I Be Interested in Church History?” (1 of 2) in the RHB series, "Cultivating Biblical Godliness."

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Lord God we do thank you that you are our God that you love us that you care for us that we especially thank you for this day that you've given us. That is really set apart to you and we pray that you would help us to worship you well in spirit and in truth according to your Scriptures.

Lord God, we we ask that you would help us to as an assist to to working through some of your scriptures as we go into this book and as an assist in helping us to just understand the record of your church and how that is valuable to us that will be able to to speak.

Well, and to listen, well as also today and Lord God, we do ask that you would help us. To be attentive, help us to gather something that's important to you. From what said today We ask that there would be any error would be stricken and not remembered but only truth would be retained and Lord.

God we do thank you that we can pray to you. We do pray in the name of your only begotten Son who is risen from the dead and ascended into heaven and and sets at your right hand and continually mediates for us. And we as perfectly as only he can and therefore, we pray this prayer in his name.

Then I met Jesus Christ. Amen. Okay, you there are outlines. I don't know if you pick one up, but they're on the table back there, by near where mr. Wrenchler is standing. The outline is effectively just the, the outline of the little booklet, whether you've read the booklet or not, we're pretty much going to go through it, not in a necessarily, as, as much detail and, and I'll probably augment some of the things that that are in the book.

I have this habit of taking books like this and trying to figure out if I could determine what the book is going to say and do all the study before I read the book and see if we're if we both aligned and most of the time we align well.

So which doesn't really surprise me that much My way of of introduction will will introduce with just a few scriptures to start with Our topic. Is why should buy I be interested in church history. Now, for some of you, when you say history, that probably immediately turns you off, For me.

It immediately is something that makes my ears perk up. Of course, I'm not sure that even when I was young, I had the right perspective, mine was almost more of a mathematical interest that I could memorize names in places and dates and that was history and that's as we'll get into, that's not really.

That is, that is a very simple. Definition of a very simple aspect of history. That goes very, very light on on context in particular other than just the context of a date line But I think our, our scriptural point is to start with in Deuteronomy chapter 32. Number verse 7.

It says, remember the days of old consider the years of many generations. Ask your father and he will show you your elders and they will tell you. We get a lot of good things. Out of that verse one is remember and you're supposed to remember the old the days of hold stuff that's already happened.

Consider the years of many generations, So it's not just what was recent? But it's what's happened for as far back as, as anybody has kept records and, and and generation to generation. And it it says talks about your father, it talks about your elders, and I don't necessarily think that means church elders, that just means people older than you, They have lived through these things.

And they've heard the stories and they've seen the value of learning from others experiences in their own life and they even have their own experiences to add on to those. The other thing is these have this happens to be a chapter and a verse that's in the book of Deuteronomy.

And there's a very real sense that the whole book of Deuteronomy is mystery itself in, that Moses, as an old man Moses, he's getting near the time that God is going to call him home. And he is, if you will restating everything, that's happened on their journey as they have left, Egypt, and and he has restated these things, He is that that's why you.

So often will see clear cross-reference between say Exodus and Deuteronomy and indeed duet of the duet Deuteronomy indicates that it's a second giving. So this is Moses history of these nearly 40 years that has happened as the children of Israel. Came out of Egypt and began to come near the Promised land.

Well, they did come near later on. They're getting ready to actually enter it under Joshua but not with Moses. So there's that We, we go to Psalm 77 and we look at verses 11 and 12, and this is a psalm of ASAP, but he says, I will remember the works of the Lord.

Shirley I will remember your wonders of old. I will also meditate on all your work and talk of your deeds. So again, the word remember comes in there. When you talk about history, you remember, history, you and, and what's important about history is that the Lord God Yahweh not be left out of history.

It's a, it's a, it's a thin history and it's a narrow history and it's a, it's certainly incomplete and false in the sense that it's incomplete and oftentimes false in the sense that there's some other agenda. If the Lord God is left out of any any of the human that that we might have, I'm not going to read it, but if you would just go maybe on the same page in your Bible, maybe on the next page, Psalm 78, some 78s is another history that's recorded in Psalms of the people in it.

Underscores remembering, what what has happened all the way up until the time, I mean, as they come out of the pump out of Egypt, all the way up to the time of of King David. And and there's memory things there, there are member things and there are generation to generation things and I think that's an important thing for us to underscore in our study of Bible history.

Is that it is a generational thing and and the continuity there and communicating the history, which is the only really valid three years. The works of the Lord especially among his people but graciously to all people on the earth as well. There are many other scriptures we could go to, I think one thing, one, one hint, I'll give you which the book doesn't give you and that is everywhere in the scriptures that it talks about generations or generation to generation, or it talks about the Lord, God and forever That ought to remind you.

History is important. Okay? Our God is a forever. God, that even means that there's a future history, that's important to us because we're not done yet. And neither is he, but there is future history, that, that we, we can't be aware of, and nearly as much detail, but we can be aware that the story's not over.

And, and, and that's, that's important. And it's like a, an important feature context that gives us bearing even upon how we live today, because there is a future and that future is forever either with the Lord or separated from the Lord. So, additional introduction in our, in our western, I want to use the word culture, although I think our culture is way too high of a word to use for the mess that we live with them.

So, maybe society would just be a better word. The attitude of particularly Western culture or society is that history tells us or tells one tells anybody, nothing that does not either vex or wearing me. And that's a, that's a paraphrase from somebody who lived back in the late 1700s or early 1800s, during the Romantic time in in England, in Great Britain.

But that, that is kind of our. Our sense in general is just, that history is boring, okay? But to the believer, history ought, not be boring at all and especially history, that is of the people of God. In our society history is rarely open for wisdom, direction or encouragement.

And yet our scriptures, tell us that that's what we ought to do. We ought to go back to the Scriptures. We ought to go to our elders. We ought to go to our fathers and mothers and we ought to rest And even we're directed to the scriptures themselves as as being put there for one thing, is for examples and there are examples of good and their examples of evil and we can learn from both.

But but our our time rarely consults that our common culture society thinks that history is kind of like I was telling you earlier how I viewed and how I liked history when I was you know, 10 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 years old. And that was, I liked the numbers liked the dates, and I liked the locations and that kind of thing.

And so, at to that degree, at that time, I was aligning with, kind of a common feeling about her understanding of history that it might be interesting, but it's really just a whole bunch of entertaining bits of trivia. And there's a lot of those entertaining bits of trivia that I still can't get out of my head.

So, In America, we talked about Western culture and when we mean that we really mean, especially, Western Europe and and and and the America's North America in, in particular, but this attitude about history, this common attitude about history is even more pervasive in America. And that's likely, because in America, we have a shorter history.

We don't have a long lineage of kings and queens, we don't have any castles to go. Look at, We don't have walls like, Hadrian's Wall. We don't have bridges like the Tower Bridge on the, on the Thames. We don't, we don't have the Appian way that you can still find today.

We, you know, a really really old church. Here is 400 years old. You can go to Europe and a really, really old churches, you know, 1500 years old or a thousand years old. We, we have graveyards that might go back as far as those churches, go back but you go to Europe, you go to Rome and you see the catacombs graves that are 2,000 years old and, and such.

So it's really that shortness. And the other thing is American history, at least as it's been presented to us. Say for the last hundred years in particular is that it's only about and ever expanding manifest destiny, they call it that, maybe a term, that you've learned in your history but it but it was always about expansion geographically or economically and it really, really leaves out any work.

In fact, they try to cover up the work that God was doing. And so we see that and to some degree, many of us have have lived that in that attitude and that teaching of history. But what we know is a really something missing there when we read the scriptures and see how rich they are concerning history.

So without seeing the manifestation, the working of God in in any history is really to rob history of what it's true meaning is and that is got at work among amongst mankind at work. Providing saving some and and ultimately judging others. There was a, there was a man named Malcolm Muggeridge.

Who's brought up in the in the book? I wouldn't have brought him up except that it's in the book. And this is a man who he was an Englishman, he was a journalist. He was a satirist. He was an author, you know, when you're sad or sometimes, most satirists are kind of scorners and mockers which which gives you some hint of character as well, not all but, but they, they contend that way.

He was early on an atheist that moved to be an agnostic. He was a communist and actually went and lived in the Soviet Union in the thirties and and Stalin disappointed him. He came back to England. He was he became so the history. So so his statement is he and some would attest to it, he became a Protestant Christian in in 1960.

But but by the early 80s and he passed away in 1990 by the early 80s. He had converted to Roman Catholicism, which is, which is problematic. But anyway, I bring this guy up. He said and this is something you don't need to remember, but he said the historicity of Christ is completely without importance and he said that because in his reason was it's because Jesus Christ is alive.

Well, That second part is is true. Jesus Christ is alive but the historicity completely without importance. I think he missed some of the chapters in the book that I love. Anyway, I think the historicity is extremely important, It's kind of difficult to to get through the things that Jesus said, it's difficult to get through the things.

That that Paul said that Peter said that John said, without seeing that, there is a real historicity of Jesus Christ that he really did live fully God and fully man in a series of years at a point in time, back in the in the first century AD that that really happened and then and that he he really lived, he really died.

He really died in the way that the scriptures say that he really rose from the dead that he really appeared. What his Paul say, all the apostles these women over 500 Paul says and these are things that Paul says, this is important documentation, you know, Paul included that as fundamental to presenting the gospel was the historicity of Jesus Christ.

That's the important thing to remember is that there is a historicity and it's truth about Jesus Christ. And the apostles who God gave Scripture to write, you know, all point to that you John does it in his way. You know, he talks about in John, the first John, he talks about Jesus, who we handled, okay.

If you call that, Peter talks about describes about the events on the Mount of Transfiguration. And then leads from that into, you know, we were with the guy, we saw it and that stuff, but even better, we have the Word of God. And and Peter size that way, Paul talks about.

Again, fundamental to the gospel, are all these things that are the real history that are recorded in the Gospels. But Paul gives us a shorthand. I think it's first Corinthians chapter 10. These are fundamental things of the gospel and they're all, they're all history of what really happened. The perspective of many who don't like history and even tear it down.

Their perspective is often antithetical to God's Word because God's Word thinks history is important. Keep talking about remember, remember tell tell tell give

it to your children, have them pass it on to their children and you know you can't you just can't read the scriptures and not see history.

You can't, you can't get through first and second, Samuel and, and the two kings, and the two chronicles and Joshua, and the entire, you just can't get through the scriptures and, and not, and, and not understand history. And yes, that includes even the first several chapters of first Kings, which you may, or made out of enjoy, but it's a whole bunch of genealogy, but it's, but it's there, you know, you can find out a lot about people just by reading their genealogies.

And, and even as Pastor James has talked, you can also find out a lot about people and that is that they all die just by reading Genealogies. And that's consistent thing. Part of being part of being human.

Our, our book talks about seven benefits of reading church history. And but first, we need that there's kind of two two points of history and one is a very simple, not really definition. But how it works is that it's about people in the events of the past and that is true as far as it goes.

But we really need to pay more attention even than that. And that is that history is something that's real, but who presents the history will also give an interpretation of the history. We often see this, you know, a lot of what applies to history applies to, to the Word of God as well.

You know, you, you need to have confidence in who it is, who's presenting your history, because they are interpreting past events. Now, they may interpret those past events in a context that's consistent with the scriptures, but they may interpret those past events in terms of some other presupposition that's not like the scriptures at all.

I mean, they may present history in the sense of Charles Darwin's evolution and billions of years, okay, Well, the scriptures won't take you there, but but some historians would

And, and we need to interpret history and especially understand history. As it's worked out in the lives, especially of God's people, and and those who interact with them, like, maybe persecutors to some degree of God's of God's people, but we get this by means of texts, okay? And when I say text, I don't mean those short little messages that you get on your phone.

So a better word would be documents. Okay. And and these these documents are sermons and diaries and letters and theological treatises and evangelical tracks. And even orders of service worship booklets church buildings. Graveyards those those are the documents and the things that are are documented and they they are what give us the history and the real context, as we see the interplay of God on people, and then the inner play of God's people, okay?

So we're almost out of time and I got through the introduction, which Pastor James asked me, will it take you longer than 25 minutes? I'm not ever done anything. Where I had to open my mouth. It took 25 minutes, There are seven benefits of reading church. History is what are our little book?

Booklet says, and if you haven't got one, haven't read it. It's a good read. It's it's fast quick. It's pretty thin obviously. Unless you just can't read, it's pretty fast that there's not a lot of pictures, though. So, anyway, I think there's still a stack back there on the table if you should need one.

Some of this may be a little redundant from where we've already been, but we'll go to number one and quickly. Number one, is the history has meaning under God's direction. We believe in a sovereign God that that all things are His, you know, he has purposed. He has intended, he has decreed, He is directing, He is providing for and that's all under God.

Whether people recognize that or not, He is at work. In fact, if he was close his eyes or turn his face to the other direction, it would all come apart. Is is a believe Colossians tells us? Let's think about this for us humans, even to think non-historically for any length of time is difficult.

And that's because we live in history, whether we like history or not, We live in what has gone before, You know, we, we have a mama and a daddy. Okay? We, we have generations before us. We may try to ignore them. I hopefully, we don't, but but they they are there.

They they do exist. We live in in what is now or the the near term and what's going on and our history also includes what will be, which believers know, what will be? We don't necessarily know everything that's between now and what will be but we do know how this finishes.

Okay. And we do know what eternity is like, whereas others have to speculate on what might be and it is, it is really just speculation to say the same thing in other way is that God is executing his sovereign plan for our lives. Not as isolated humans, but as descendants of our ancestors parents of subsequent future generations and really members of present day, churches and communities and nations and just various organizations that that we tend to be involved in, but God has got us working that out with with family and and church and nation being particularly in important.

Again, restating the study of history is the study of of God's activity. Whether whether people will acknowledge that or not, that's what it really is. If you recall Psalm 111 verse 4 of the first half of it says he's made his wonderful works to be remembered. So there's that remember word, again, You just can't get away from the remember word.

When you're, when you're in the scriptures in the scriptures. Again, we go back and, and I think I said first Corinthians 10, maybe it's first Corinthians 15. Anyway, the gospel demands that there are historical events that really happens. It's not it's not just that Jesus is alive. He certainly is but that's like say in the whole gospel is just about.

You got your ticket to not, go to hell. I mean that that's that's a very short hand and incomplete gospel. That there's there's there's more it's much richer than that, and we do well to study it Again. I'll refer you back to Psalm 78, but, you know, there are multiple histories in the, in the think about the genealogies, that take you up to the to the flood history, Think about the genealogies, that take you up up to Moses.

It's history Think about the genealogies and some of that is redundant. That's in first Kings. You look, look in Nehemiah looking Ezra, we got lots of genealogies. You look at those things you say, why are they there in the, in the scriptures? The interesting question, is them being there in the Old Testament?

Why are they not in the New Testament? Do you see any genealogies in the New Testament? Well, but there are restatements. Yeah, you do. Okay, Berth of Christ. You see two, but that's the only place, right? It's not anywhere else. I don't think that I have ever found, but anyway, and those are restatements and, and they're consistent with genealogies that we see in in the Old Testament.

But why are they there? Because they're pointing us to who Jesus Christ, was according to the flesh, right? And they're pointing us to who he was legally as, as the, you know. So he's both the genetics and according to the how according to being human, he's the genetic Son of David, But he's also the legal heir of David, and you can see that come down through those genealogies and that's the importance.

But you move into acts. I mean, again the only place you kind of see a history or genealogy is in, not the only place but one really significant one Pastor. James is going to preach to us today. Is that for just happened to be on the same Sunday because because Steven preaches that that history and brings people forward to, you know, hey, this is why you need a savior and you're just like, people have always been And so history, ought be constructed upon evidence.

We need to be aware of the historians who write. They have may have one one or more agendas or presuppositions and those agendas and presuppositions will indeed shape how they read or how they interpret that the evidence and even what they declare to be evidence with, you know, which we may or may not agree with.

We have to ask the question is God's word, the authoritative guidebook in history or not? And you could say well there's a lot of history there but it is at the authority Woods authoritative and everything it speaks to, okay? And you can, you can even look at things. Like You know there's a big debate If you look at non-Christian scholarly history they have a real they have what's called a late Exodus as opposed to an early exodus but you can go into the scriptures and figure out just running the timelines from the scriptures that Exodus has to be a lot earlier than the common history but they get hung up on that ramecies guy.

Okay. Which, which is just like a a false direction. It's a head fake. I mean, it's true about a place, but it, he's not the Pharaoh at the time. Okay. And, and that will even get into things like. So How was God's Word communicated in writing? How did Moses do that?

Where did he learn that? The Egyptians had hieroglyphics, the scriptures won't written at hieroglyphics. How did that language? Come about, Well, part of that kind of leads you to, it's a lot earlier than a later. Definition that says our language came from, you know, the Molec worshipping Phoenicians or something, right?

Which just didn't. And so that, that finishes number one, it's late. We'll, we could go faster through the rest of it and we'll finish next week. Okay, let me pray, it, we'll go. Oh, Lord God, we do. Thank you that. You are our God. We thank you that you are the author and you are the finisher of what we understand as as history.

We thank you. That you're a great God, that you are infinite that you are outside of time that you are the alpha and the Omega there before the beginning and thereafter the end. Thank you for that. Lord God, we pray that you'll help us to worship you in spirit and truth worship you.

Well, today, as we move into the other building, We thank you that we can pray to you and pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.