

Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

History 101 Introduction

Break out your maps and histories as we travel in a time machine of sorts to examine History & Geography through a biblical world view. I chose to cover these two topics together because when we speak of Geography we will discuss the world from the perspective of countries, kingdoms and boundaries and the only way any map is correct is if it has a date on it, because countries, kingdoms and boundaries are always changing and in flux. That being said the Bible is the greatest source for geography and historical information in all of antiquity. Not because it is a geography text or a history text, quite to the contrary, purely as an incidental reality because the Bible contains so many names of people and places and chronological narratives and in-depth, detailed descriptions of, legal, spiritual, and cultural practices of peoples in their context, it is an invaluable resource for Historians, Cartographers, Archeologists, Paleontologists, and any other field of scientific study that touches on any aspect of God's creation.

That being said let's start by defining Geography & History (what follows is a paraphrase of what you can get at good old Wikipedia).

Geography: Geography is from Greek *geographia*, "earth description" is the science that studies the lands, the features, the inhabitants, and the phenomena of the Earth. A literal translation would be "to describe or write about the Earth". The first person to use the word "geography" was Eratosthenes (276-194 BC). Historically there are four traditions in geographical research. Modern geography is an all-encompassing discipline that foremost seeks to understand the Earth and all of its human and natural complexities. —not merely where objects are, but how they have changed and come to be. Geography has been called "the world discipline" and "the bridge between the human and the physical sciences". Geography is divided into two main branches: human geography and physical geography.

History: History is from Greek *historia*, meaning "inquiry, knowledge acquired by investigation" this is an umbrella term that relates to past events as well as the discovery, collection, organization, and presentation of information about these events. The term includes cosmic, geologic, and organic history, but is often generically implied to mean human history. History can also refer to the academic discipline which uses a narrative to examine and analyze a sequence of past events, and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect.

Historians sometimes debate the nature of history and its usefulness by discussing the study of the discipline as an end in itself and as a way of providing "perspective" on the problems of the present. Stories common to a particular culture, but not supported by external sources (such as the tales surrounding King Arthur) are usually classified as cultural heritage or legends, because they do not support the "disinterested investigation" required of the discipline of history. Events occurring prior to written record are considered prehistory.

Herodotus, a 5th century B.C. Greek historian is considered to be the "father of history", and, along with his contemporary Thucydides, helped form the foundations for the modern study of human history. Their influence has helped spawn variant interpretations of the nature of history which have evolved over the centuries and continue to change today. The modern study of history is wide-ranging, and includes the study of specific regions and the study of certain topical or thematic elements of historical investigation. Often history is taught as part of primary and secondary education, and the academic study of history is a major discipline in University studies.

George Santayana, a 20th century Spanish-American philosopher wrote in his book Reason in Common Sense, The Life of Reason, Vol.1 "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." this was a modification of Edmund Burke's statement in the 1700's, "Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it." I have also heard this said as "those who are ignorant of history are doomed to repeat it". I would further state it this way. "Mankind's sinful nature will repeat itself and our knowledge of history and application of its lessons will have little effect on the pain and suffering sin will cause in the future, however the forgiving healing reconciling nature of Christ will heal all wounds of the past present and future.

In Christ Pastor Portier