

The definition of the word **HISTORY** is "an account of what has happened in the life and development of a people, country, institution, etc., usually with an analysis and explanation." Looking back through the events of time gives the informed observer insight into the all-important questions, such as the origin and gradual developments of any race, nation or people. Accurate historical accounts tell exactly what happened in past events, but it is the meaning and interpretation of those events where a difference of opinions arise. Because of these differing opinions, a number of interpretations have been set forth by historians in an effort to explain the purpose of past events.

If any historian or philosopher can satisfactorily explain to himself and his peers what transpired in the past; he therefore feels he can give a purposeful explanation of the present and the future. When examining each interpretation of history it is evident that each is based upon two major premises in the minds of their proponents:

1. Their concept of the person of Almighty God, and
2. Their belief concerning the purpose of man's existence.

There are two major, yet opposing interpretations of history:

I. THE SECULAR WORLD VIEW

This interpretation promotes the concepts based upon the false theory of the "self-determination" of man. It rejects the idea of divine intervention and believes that man controls his own destiny. The following theories are aspects of the Secular World View:

1. The **Cyclical View** sees all of history as a series of endless repeating cycles which have no ultimate purpose or goal. It teaches that there is no climax to history, therefore each cycle within itself is insignificant to the whole.

It views history as having no original plan from its beginning as designed by an all Sovereign Creator, therefore it reserves no place for an ultimate fulfilled purpose. This view has been widely accepted from antiquity by many eastern pagan religions of the ancient world based upon what they see in the repeating seasons of life-cycles of nature. This viewpoint has led to

the naive acceptance of such beliefs as reincarnation, fatalism and utter hopelessness.

2. **The Marxist View** is a philosophical scheme with all mankind as being involved in a "class struggle" between the *bourgeoisie* (capitalists, middle-class) and the *proletariat*

(industrial working class) which will eventually result in a "utopia" or the "perfect socialist state." When formulating this philosophy, Karl Marx put all men into one of two categories: the "liberating class" as "saviors" or into the "oppressing class" as the adversaries of the perfect social order. This atheistic view polarizes society and has resulted in utter social chaos and revolution. Marx viewed man as nothing more than an economic materialistic animal whose sole purpose was to serve the all-powerful state through human labor. The result is utter hopelessness for mankind.

3. **The Existential View** is often referred to as the *open-ended* view because it sees no real meaning or purpose to history or the future, but can only relate to the present. It was popularized in France after World War II, chiefly by Jean-Paul Sartre as a literary philosophic cult of nihilism and pessimism. It teaches that each individual exists as a separate entity in a purposeless universe and can only improve himself by opposing his hostile environment in exercising his free will.

Nihilism

is that philosophy which denies the existence of absolute truth and the foundational basis of knowledge. This was the basis of the hippie sub-culture known as "

Moral Relativism.

" Its cry was "

the right for absolute freedom of expression,

" "do your own thing," "do it if it feels good" or "if I don't think it's wrong, then it's all right." These concepts spawned a cultural revolution resulting in the breakdown of authority in our civilization.

Within this theory, man is thought of only as a "social animal" without moral responsibility; so therefore, no accountability toward God his Creator, if such a Creator even exists. In other words, evil does not exist because no absolute moral laws exist. The *existentialists* embrace the beliefs that man is the only source of understanding our material universe, the social order and human nature itself. It has given rise to the anti-Biblical theory of "environmentalism verses human depravity" in teaching that man can only improve his moral status by changing the environment in which he lives with an attitude of total dependence on the state for social and economic support. Thus

statism

is born out of man's neglect of personal responsibility. If man is no longer responsible, he is therefore no longer accountable to a God of justice and His code of absolute moral laws, but is now accountable only to himself. Thus man has become his own "god."

II. THE CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW

This interpretation accepts and teaches that God has a plan for mankind and is definitely involved and even intervenes in the affairs of human events. Accepting the Sovereign God as creator, He therefore is the Supreme Authority over all His creation.

This is also known as the **Providential View** of history because it recognizes and accepts the intervening control of an All-Wise and Benevolent God both in the national and personal affairs of man. The origin of this view is found in the words of God Himself as recorded in the Christian Sacred Writings known as the Holy Bible. The Biblical concept of God is that He alone is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe and all that is therein. He alone has the right to exercise supreme authority over the affairs of men and to His laws all men have a responsibility to obey and someday will be held accountable for their actions. The supreme authority of God supersedes the authority of all men, institutions and civil governments. Therefore, the battle-cry of every Christian should be "to God alone belongs dominion." Being that Jesus Christ was the full incarnation of the Eternal God in flesh and now reigns victorious over death, hell and the grave, He alone deserves the rightful authority of dominion over all mankind. Therefore, to Him alone we affirm "The Crown Rights of King Jesus."

The Historicist approach to prophecy is an admission of God's presiding control of history leading to a climactic conclusion with the fulfillment of God's plan as set forth in Scripture. It is one's understanding of God's plan in history that makes clear God's plan for the future.