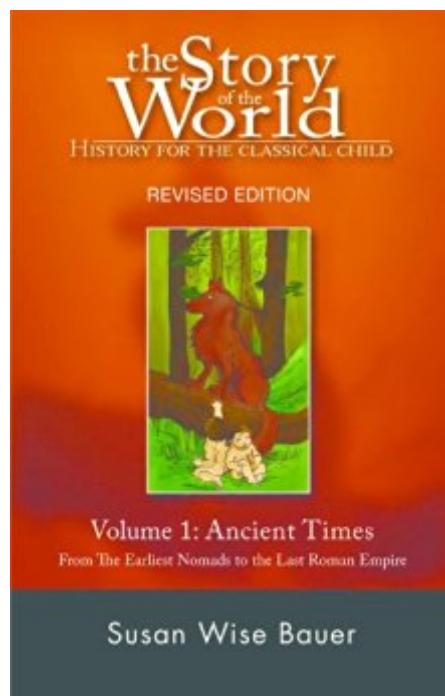


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The Story Of The World: History For The Classical Child: Volume 1: Ancient Times: From The Earliest Nomads To The Last Roman Emperor



Synopsis

What terrible secret was buried in Shi Huangdi's tomb? Did nomads like lizard stew? And how did a six-year-old become the last emperor of Rome? Told in a straightforward, engaging style, The Story of the World covers the sweep of human history through the end of the Roman empire. Africa, China, Europe, the Americas--find out what happened all around the world in long-ago times. The Story of the World, Volume 1 includes maps, a timeline, and illustrations. This read-aloud series is designed for parents to share with elementary-school children. Enjoy it together and introduce your child to the marvelous story of the world's civilizations.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

We used this book last year and are now half way through the second volume. I think both books do a phenomenal job of meeting their stated purpose: to INTRODUCE world history in an engaging fashion to early elementary aged students. I think it's very important to purchase the activity book along with the book, as the activity book not only has tons of really fun and reasonably simple activities that help bring history alive, but also contains stellar recommendations for further reading.

The fact that many of those recommendations flat out contradict the viewpoints presented by the author in this book is an indication of Bauer's academic integrity, in my opinion. Many of the critiques of this series hinge on the fact that the book is loaded with inaccuracies and mythology. It is. But even stick-to-the-facts-and-only-the-facts history text books (which are BORING) are full of inaccuracies. At least this is interesting. Also, an understanding of the intended purpose of the book is important. It's designed as a read-aloud, NOT to be read independently by the child. It's also designed to serve as an INTRODUCTION to historical topics and parents are encouraged to supplement the stories by doing further investigation. I'd like to see the book that could adequately present all of the complexities and varying historical arguments about a topic in two pages in a child-friendly format. I think there is a Christian bias throughout the book, but as a non-Christian I haven't found that to be particularly problematic. For example, the story of the Exodus is presented in a much more factual format than many of the other mythologies in the book. There are plenty of people who believe in the absolute historical accuracy of that story, so for them that's just fine.

I read a lot of the reviews on this book - especially the negative reviews - and had to write my own because I think there are many ways to approach this book series. This is our first year homeschooling our 4th grade daughter and we met and grilled many of the homeschool mothers in our area on their system of teaching. One of them recommended the Wise/Bauer book "The Well-Trained Mind" which seemed to be a very good fit for both my teaching style and our daughter's learning style. "The Well-Trained Mind" recommends, of course, this series of books for teaching history. But what a lot of people are missing, I think, is that Volume 1 is meant for 1st grade, Volume 2 for 2nd grade, etc. These 4 volumes are also meant to be the first of 3 levels of teaching history as the child goes through his/her 12 years of education. In other words, these four volumes are laying the groundwork for what's to come. It's not a be-all end-all history course. The reason my approach is different is because I'm using this series of books to catch my daughter up to where a well-educated child should be by the 4th grade. Up through to the end of 3rd grade in the public school system, the only exposure she'd had to history is to the timespan just before and just after the American Revolutionary War. So we had a lot of ground to cover. But I didn't want it to turn into a grind for her, so I took the authors' intentions to heart and I'm using this series to form a groundwork for a basic understanding of history. So what I'm doing is covering all four volumes in 1 year. That works out to a little over 2 months per volume or 4 chapters (for Volume 1) per week. I skipped the activity book but did buy the workbook with the quizzes.

Having read and enjoyed Susan Wise Bauer's larger volume of history for adults, I was excited to use this book set with my children. Halfway through it I have decided to continue my search for a foundation for my history class. My classroom experience using this text has been good in many ways. The story format is engaging, as history should be for a young person (in this case second and third graders). Including stories and myths from those times is not a bad thing, and it is up to the teacher to be able to help the student differentiate between the two. Remember that many of the people of these time periods did believe these things and based their cultures on them. That doesn't mean we have to take the stories as the truth, but knowing them gives us insight into other aspects of these cultures and how they developed further. Students should learn factual information, but I think many approaches to history are so factual that they end up becoming dry, dull drudgery for students, causing them to lose any enjoyment they may have had of the subject. On that topic, I have greatly enjoyed working through some of the supplemental activities with my students. More importantly the students have loved the activities and have told their parents that history is their favorite subject. I do not do every activity, but choose the ones that give the students a stronger sense of what it would be like to live during this time period. Some of the suggestions in the activity guide have given me ideas for my own projects that the students have really enjoyed, as well. I have the first version of the activity guide and would not recommend it. I also teach art and would endorse very few of the drawings in the book; why expose your young people to such bad art?

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