



## How to Teach History with Wes Callihan

### Lesson 9: Two Ancient Historians – Livy

#### Outline:

Introduction: Why we need to study the classical historians

- We have two thousand years of tradition to look to.
- We ought to learn from the Christians from the past.
- In order to escape progressivism, we have to read the classical historians.

Livy (59 BC – 17 AD), Major Work: *The History of Rome (Ab Urbe Condita)*

- The story begins with the founding of Rome with Aeneas himself.
- Parallels between Rome and America:
  - We live in a time of when there is much love of wealth and luxury.
  - We've abandoned the ideals we used to hold to (honor, courage, thrive, etc) and now we are all about the passions.
  - This was a slow fall.
  - "Rome was like a great building built on a swamp...slowly sinking in."
- Period of the kings; rejection of kings and the founding of the republic
  - The monarchy lasts about 250 years.
  - One king revised the calendar.
  - One king devotes himself to the revival of the cult of the gods.
  - Other kings are great military leaders.
  - At the end he tells about tyrannical kings at the end of the monarchy.
  - If the people had gained their liberty before they had grown politically mature, they would have destroyed themselves.
- The Romans needed to mature politically
  - A wise father gives their child more freedom as they grown to maturity.
  - If the king had been good, perhaps the people would have been willing to tolerate his kingship longer.
  - Parallels to the American republic and gradual, growing political maturity
    - The American people had gained political maturity.
    - King George III becomes tyrannical, and so the colonists rebel.
- The Roman patricians: soil, farming, landowners, tradition, and virtues of the family
  - Patriotism comes from respect for the family and love of the soil.
  - People who have land and accumulate wealth have to develop a business sense out of mere self-interest.



- A landowner has a vested interest in the economic decisions of the government.
- Record of heroes: Cincinnatus (c. 400 BC). Comparison to George Washington
  - This is the kind of character Livy wants us to watch for.
- American founders studied Roman history more than any other study because the Roman experiment was successful.