

<<圣经的故事>>

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### 内容概要

《圣经的故事》是一部以通俗的手法描写和演绎《圣经》故事的文学巨著，它是由荷兰裔美著名历史学家，作家房龙（1882-1944）编著而成，他以简洁优美的叙述，解读了《圣经》这部伟大作品，勾勒出了一幅犹太人的历史画卷，《圣经》是怎样一部书，包含哪些内容，作者是谁，成书于何时，犹太教与基督教的关系，希腊罗马文明与基督教的关系，耶稣是怎样一个人等等，这些在房龙的娓娓叙述之下变得清晰而迷人。

这本中文导读英文版的经典读本，无论作为了解《圣经》的读本，还是作为语言学习的课外读物，对当代中国的读者都将产生重要的影响。

为了使读者能够了解每篇故事的概况，进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平，在每篇英文故事的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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### 作者简介

房龙（Hendrik Willem van Loon，1882-1944），荷裔美国著名通俗历史学家。一生出版了三十余种书籍，单枪匹马地将人类各方面的历史几乎全部复述一遍。其中《宽容》、《人类的故事》、《房龙地理》等畅销著作，影响了几代人。郁达夫曾说，房龙的笔有一种魔力，干燥无味的科学常识经她那么一写，无论大人小孩，读他书的人都觉得娓娓忘倦了。

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## 章节摘录

1. 一份文学遗产 A Literary Inheritance 这本书写的不是历史上确实发生过什么，而是一个叫犹太的部落认为发生了什么。

犹太人为我们提供了《圣经》和基督，但对于这个奇特部族的起源，我们竟然一无所知。

4000年前，巴比伦王国和亚述王国通过叙利亚这条狭长的地面与埃及通商。

从阿拉伯沙漠迁来的闪族部落就分布在这一地区。

部族之间争吵、混战、流浪、掠夺。

闪族部落的一支犹太人曾经流浪了千百年，竭力想拥有一小块属于自己的土地。

他们曾经在埃及住过。

后来，他们离开埃及，联合成一个强大部落，征服了巴勒斯坦，建立了独立的国家。

这个国家存在了几个世纪，然后并入了亚历山大帝国，之后又成了罗马帝国的一部分。

犹太人撰写了自己的历史，用他们的看法，讲述了他们在埃及人、迦南人、巴比伦人当中的经历。

《圣经》就是一部犹太人版本的古代亚洲史和非洲史。

《旧约》基本用希伯来语写成，只有几章预言是用阿拉米文写的。

在1000年的时间里，犹太人的故事和预言被记录下来，汇编成书。

后来，这些文字被译成希腊文，传到了欧洲。

基督死后的前两三百年，在罗马当局的迫害下，基督和他的使徒的故事秘密地通过手抄的册子传播。

后来，教会整理了这些不同的版本，经过几百年的讨论和争辩，最终确定了我们现在所见的《新约》。

HOW THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO BE WRITTEN AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HOLY BOOK IN THE COURSE OF MANY CENTURIES THE pyramids were a thousand years old. Babylon and Nineveh had become the centres of vast empires. The valley of the Nile and that of the broad Euphrates and Tigris were filled with swarming masses of busy people, when a small tribe of desert wanderers, for reasons of their own, decided to leave their home along the sandy wastes of the Arabian desert, and began to travel northward in search of more fertile fields. In time to come, these wanderers were to be known as the Jews. Centuries later, they were to give us the most important of all our books, the Bible.

Still later, one of their women was to give birth to the kindest and greatest of all teachers. And yet, curious to say, we know nothing of the origin of those strange folk, who came from nowhere, who played the greatest role ever allotted to the race of man, and then departed from the historical stage to become exiles among the nations of the world. What I shall therefore tell you in this chapter is somewhat vague in its general character and none too reliable as to detail. But the archaeologists are busily digging in the soil of Palestine. They are learning more and more as time goes by. A few facts are at our disposal, and of these I shall try to give you a trustworthy account.

Through the western part of Asia run two broad rivers. They take their origin among the high mountains of the north. They lose themselves in the waters of the Persian Gulf. Along the banks of those two muddy streams, life was very agreeable and quite lazy. Therefore the people who inhabited either the cold mountains of the north or the scorching desert of the south all tried to get a foothold in the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Whenever they had a chance, they left their old homes and wandered into the fertile plain. They fought each other and conquered each other, and founded one civilization right on top of the ruins of another that had gone before. They built large cities like Babylon and Nineveh, and more than forty centuries ago they turned this part of the world into a veritable paradise, the inhabitants of which were envied by all other men. But when you look at the map you will see many millions of busy little peasants tilling the fields of another powerful country. They live on the banks of the Nile and their country is called Egypt. They are separated from Babylonia and Assyria by a narrow strip of land. There are many things which they need and which they can obtain only in the distant countries of the fertile plain. There are many things which the Babylonians and the Assyrians need, and which are

manufactured only in Egypt. The two nations therefore trade with one another, and the highroad of commerce runs through the narrow strip of land which we have just mentioned. Nowadays we call that part of the world Syria. In olden days it was known by many names. It is composed of low mountains and broad valleys. It has few trees, and the soil is baked by the sun. But a number of small lakes and many little brooks add a touch of loveliness to the sombre monotony of the rocky hills. From the earliest times on, this region of the ancient highroads has been inhabited by different tribes, who have moved hither from the Arabian desert. They all belong to the Semitic race. They all speak an identical language. They worship the same gods. Often they fight each other. Then they make treaties of peace with each other, and fight each other again. They steal each other's cities and each other's wives and each other's flocks, and generally behave as such wandering tribes will behave when there is no higher authority in the land than the violence of their own will and the strength of their own good sword. In a vague way they recognise the authority of the Kings of Egypt or the Kings of Babylonia or Assyria. When the tax-collectors of those mighty potentates come down the road with their armed retinue of men, the quarrelling herdsmen become very humble. With many profound bows, they acknowledge themselves the obedient servants of the Pharaoh of Memphis or the King of Akkad. But when His Excellency, the Governor, together with his soldiers, has gone, then the old life of tribal warfare continues as merrily as before. Please do not take these struggles too seriously. They were the only outdoor sport these ancient people could enjoy, and the damage done was usually very slight. Besides, it kept the young men in good trim. The Jews, who were to play such a great role in the history of the human race, began their career as one of the quarrelling, fighting, wandering, stealing little tribes who were trying to maintain themselves in the land of the High Roads. Unfortunately, we really know next to nothing of the beginning of their history. Many learned men have made many learned guesses. But a plausible guess does not fill an historic gap. And when we read that the Jews originally came from the land of Ur on the Persian Gulf, this may be true, but also it may be false. Rather than tell you many things which were not so, I tell you nothing at all and only mention a very few facts, upon which all historians agree. The earliest ancestors of the Jews probably lived in the desert of Arabia. We do not know in what century they left their old homesteads, that they might enter the fertile plain of western Asia. We know that they wandered for many centuries, trying to get hold of a bit of land which they could call their own, but the road which they followed has been lost. We also know that at one time or another, the Jews crossed the desert of Mount Sinai and that they lived for a while in Egypt. From that moment on, however, Egyptian and Assyrian texts begin to throw some light upon the events which are enumerated in the Old Testament. The rest of the story became a familiar tale—how the Jews left Egypt and after an endless trek in the desert, were united into a strong tribe—how that tribe conquered a small part of the land of the High Roads, called Palestine, and there established a nation, and how that nation fought for its independence and survived several centuries until it was absorbed by the empire of the Macedonian King, Alexander, and was then turned into part of one of the minor provinces of the great Roman state. But when I mention these historical occurrences, bear one thing in mind. This time, I am not writing a book of history. I am not going to tell you what (according to the best historical information) actually happened. I am going to try to show you how a certain people, called the Jews, thought that certain things had happened. As you all know, there is a great deal of difference between the things that “are facts” and the things which we “believe to be facts”. Every text-book of history of every land tells the story of the past as the people of that particular country believe it to be true, but when you cross the frontier and read the text-book of the nearest neighbour, you will therein find a very different account. Yet the little children who read those chapters will believe them to be true until the end of their days. Here and there, of course, an historian or a philosopher or another queer person will read all the books of all the countries, and perhaps he will come to an appreciation of something that approaches the absolute truth. But if he wishes to lead a peaceful and happy life, he will keep this information to himself. What is true of the rest of the world is also true of the Jews. The Jews of thirty centuries ago and those of twenty centuries ago and those of to-day are ordinary human beings, just as you and I. They are no better (as they sometimes claim) and no worse (as their enemies often state) than any one else. They possess certain virtues which are very uncommon, and they also have certain faults which are exceedingly common. But so much has been written about them, good, bad and indifferent, that it is very difficult

to come to a correct estimate of their just place in history. We experience the same difficulty when we try to learn the historical value of the chronicles which the Jews themselves kept and which tell us their adventures among the men of Egypt and among the men of the land of Canaan and among the men of the land of Babylonia.

Newcomers are rarely popular. In most of the countries which the Jews visited during their endless years of peregrination, they were newcomers. The old and settled inhabitants of the valleys of the Nile and of the dales of Palestine and those who lived along the banks of the Euphrates did not receive them with open arms. On the contrary, they said, " We have hardly room for our own sons and daughters. Let those foreigners go elsewhere. " Then there was trouble. When the Jewish historians looked back upon those ancient days, they tried to place their own ancestors in the best possible light. Nowadays we do the same thing. We praise the virtues of the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts and we describe the horrors of those first years when the poor white man was forever exposed to the cruel arrow of the savage. But we rarely mention the fate of the red man, who was exposed to the equally cruel bullet of the white man ' s blunderbuss. An honest history, written from the point of view of the Indians, would make mighty interesting reading. But the Indian is dead and gone, and we shall never know how the coming of the foreigners in the year 1620 impressed him. Which is a pity. For many centuries, the Old Testament was the only history of old Asia which our grandfathers could decipher and understand. But a century ago, we began to learn how to read the hieroglyphics of Egypt, and fifty years ago we discovered the key to the mysterious nail-writing of Babylon. We now know that there was a very different side to the stories which were related by the old Jewish chronicle writers. We see them commit the mistakes of all patriotic historians and we understand how they perverted the truth to increase the glory and the splendour of their own race. All this, however (I repeat it), does not properly belong in my book. I am not writing a history of the Jewish people. I am not defending them, or attacking their motives. I am merely repeating their own version of ancient Asiatic and African history. I shall not study the critical texts of learned historians. A little Bible, bought for a dime, will provide me with all the material I can possibly need. If you had used the word " Bible " to a Jew of the first century of our era, he would not have known what you were talking about. The word is comparatively new. It was invented in the fourth century by John Chrysostom, the patriarch of Constantinople, who referred to the general collection of Holy Books of the Jews as the " Biblia " or the " Books ". This collection had been growing steadily for almost a thousand years. With a few exceptions, the chapters had all been written in Hebrew. But Hebrew was no longer a spoken language when Jesus was born. Aramaic (much simpler and widely known among the common people) had taken its place and several of the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament were written in that language. But please don ' t ask me " when the Bible was written ", because I could not answer you. Every little Jewish village and every little Jewish temple possessed certain accounts of its own which had been copied on the skins of animals or on bits of Egyptian papyrus by pious old men, who took an interest in such things. Sometimes small collections were made of different laws and of prophecies for handy use among those who visited the temple. During the eighth century B. C. , when the Jews had settled down to their life in Palestine, those compilations grew larger and larger. At some time or other between the third and the first century before our era, they were translated into the Greek language, and were brought to Europe. Since then they have been translated into every language of the world. As for the New Testament, its history is quite simple. During the first two or three centuries after the death of Christ, the followers of the humble carpenter of Nazareth were forever in danger of trouble with the Roman authorities. The doctrines of love and charity were thought to be very dangerous to the safety of the Roman state, which had been founded upon the brute strength of the sword. The early Christians, therefore, could not go to a book store and say: " Please give me a ' Life of Christ ' and an account of the acts of his Apostles. " They got their information from secret little pamphlets which were passed from hand to hand. Thousands of such pamphlets were copied and recopied, until people lost all track of the truth of their contents. Meanwhile, the Church had been triumphant. The persecuted Christians became the rulers of the old Roman state. First of all they brought some order into the literary chaos caused by three centuries of persecution. The (head of the) Church called together a number of learned men. They read all the accounts which were popular, and discarded most of them. They decided to keep a few of the gospels and a few of the letters which had been written

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by the Apostles to the members of distant congregations. All the other stories were discarded. Then followed several centuries of discussion and dispute. Many famous Synods were held in Rome and in Carthage (a new city built upon the ruins of the famous old seaport) and in Trullo, and seven hundred years after the death of Christ the New Testament (as we know it) was definitely adopted by the Churches of the East and by those of the West. Since then there have been countless translations made from the original Greek, but no very important changes have occurred in the text.

The Story of the Bible                      A Literary ?Inheritance



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《圣经的故事》简洁优美的英文和忠实流畅的中文对译，再配上房龙亲手绘制的插图，将给你的阅读带来无穷乐趣。

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