

房龙经典·中文导读英文原版

[美] 房 龙◎著

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畅销版

THE STORY OF  
THE BIBLE

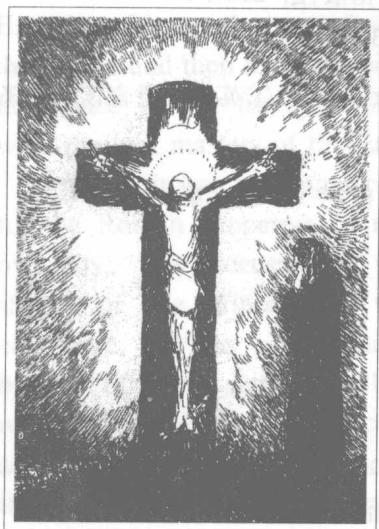
# 圣经的故事

★ 中文导读英文原版 ★

中国城市出版社  
CHINA CITY PRESS



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[美] 房龙◎著  
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## 图书在版编目 (CIP) 数据

圣经的故事: 中文导读英文原版/ (美) 房龙著; 汝敏编译. —北京: 中国城市出版社, 2009. 4

ISBN 978 - 7 - 5074 - 2103 - 3

I. 圣… II. ①房…②汝… III. ①英语—语言读物②圣经—通俗读物 IV. H319. 4; B

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2009) 第 026749 号

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总 策 划 徐昌强 (greatbook@sina.com 13661335586)  
责 任 编 辑 华 风  
装 帧 设 计 美信书籍设计工作室  
责任技术编辑 张建军  
出 版 发 行 中国城市出版社  
地 址 北京市海淀区太平路甲 40 号 (邮编 100039)  
网 址 www.citypress.cn  
发行部电话 (010) 63454857 63289949  
发行部传真 (010) 63421417 63400635  
发行部信箱 zgcsfx@sina.com  
编辑部电话 (010) 52732085 52732055 63421488 (Fax)  
投 稿 信 箱 city\_editor@sina.com  
总编室电话 (010) 52732057  
总编室信箱 citypress@sina.com  
经 销 新华书店  
印 刷 北京集惠印刷有限责任公司  
字 数 520 千字 印张 22.5 彩插 19  
开 本 787 × 1092 (毫米) 1/16  
版 次 2009 年 4 月第 1 版  
印 次 2009 年 4 月第 1 次印刷  
定 价 36.00 元

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## 出版前言

亨德里克·威廉·房龙（Hendrik Willem van Loon，1882 - 1944），著名荷兰裔美国作家、历史学家、科普作家和文学家。

房龙于1882年1月出生于荷兰鹿特丹。幼年时期的房龙由于家庭暴力而感受不到温暖，8岁就进入寄宿学校，10岁就迷上了史学。20岁以后，房龙到美国康奈尔大学、德国慕尼黑大学求学，获得博士学位，但他并没有成为书斋里的学究。他当过编辑、记者和老师，屡经漂泊，同时苦练写作。房龙还是个多才多艺的人，从小就对历史、地理、船舶、绘画和音乐感兴趣，而且终生未曾放弃。他能用10种文字写作并与人交流，还拉得一手很好的小提琴，善绘画，他著作中几乎所有的插图都是自己绘制。

1921年，房龙出版《人类的故事》，使他一举成名，从此迎来了创作的丰收期。之后，《发明的故事》、《圣经的故事》、《美国的故事》、《房龙地理》（又名《人类的家园》）、《人类的艺术》、《宽容》（又名《人类的解放》）、《与世界伟人谈心》、《伦勃朗传》、《荷兰共和国兴衰史》、《太平洋的故事》等几十部著作陆续出版，几乎本本畅销，饮誉世界，许多国家都翻译出版了他的作品。可以说，房龙一生出版的30余种著作，将人类各方面的历史几乎全都复述了一遍。

房龙在学问和文学上坚持人文主义的立场，并逐渐形成了一套自己的理解和表达方式。他认为：“凡学问一到穿上专家的拖鞋，躲进了它的‘精舍’，而把它鞋子上的泥土作肥料去的时候，它就宣布自己预备死了。与人隔绝的知识生活是引到毁灭去的。”因此，深入浅出地将艰深枯燥的学问化作轻松风趣的精神食粮，成了房龙作品的显著特征。



房龙的作品基本围绕人类生存与发展的最本质问题，贯穿其中的精神是科学、宽容和进步，其目标是向人类的无知与偏见挑战，从而将知识和真理普及为人所共知的常识。

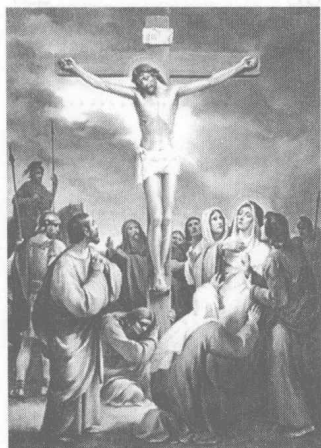
当然，由于房龙坚持人文主义立场，在有些问题上不免有失偏颇甚至谬误；同时，由于他的生活时代所限，使他在有些问题上的见解不可避免地受到局限，如他在《房龙地理》中错误地将西藏放到“中亚高地”，而不是放到“中国”这一章来讲述；又比如，他以地理环境决定论来解释日本近代的侵略行为。所有这些，希望读者在阅读时能够甄别。

房龙的主要作品在 20 世纪 20 年代就开始被介绍给我国读者。历史学家和著名报人曹聚仁回忆说，他早年曾在一次候车时偶然买到《人类的故事》中译本，“那天下午，我发痴似的，车来了，在车上读，到了家中，把晚饭吞下去，就靠在床上读，一直读到天明，走马观花地总算看完了。这 50 年中，我总是看了又看，除了《儒林外史》、《红楼梦》，没有其他的书这么吸引我了。”我国著名文学家郁达夫也曾评价房龙的作品说：“房龙的笔，有一种魔力……是将文学家的手法，拿来用以讲述科学……无论大人小孩，读他书的人都觉得娓娓忘倦了。”

房龙作品在我国至今仍然畅销不衰。显然，对于我国学习英语的广大读者来说，亲切而不失幽默，同时又饱含人文气息的房龙作品原著是难得的阅读文本。因此，我们在推出这套房龙作品的英文原著时，为了有助于读者了解书中的内容，特意采用了中文导读的形式，对全书各章内容进行了简要介绍，希望对读者有所裨益。

参与本书中文导读故事素材搜集整理的有李少龙、李平、吴平、康健、赵悦、张岩、杨滢、殷俊、赵永安、孙晔等。由于我们水平有限，错误在所难免，希望读者朋友不吝指正。

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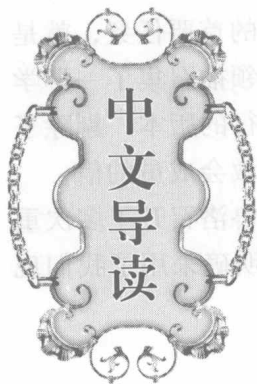
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## 1. 一部文学遗产

## A LITERARY INHERITANCE

HOW THE OLD AND THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO BE  
WRITTEN AND WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HOLY BOOK IN THE  
COURSE OF MANY CENTURIES



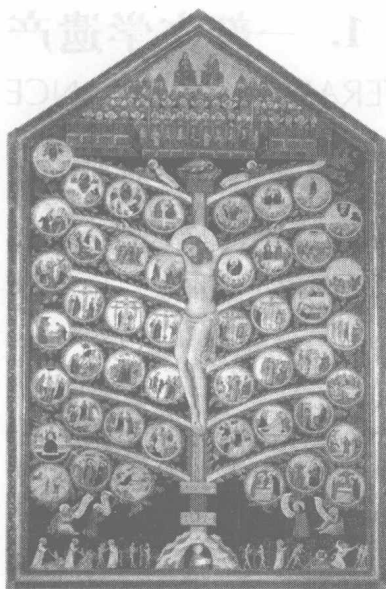
《圣经》是犹太人的作品。早期的犹太人和其他居住在叙利亚土地上的众多部族都属于闪族人。犹太人最早的祖先可能住在阿拉伯沙漠，不知何时离开故乡来到西亚肥沃的平原。他们漂流了几个世纪，竭力想拥有一小块属于自己的土地，但他们漂流的路线已经无人知晓。犹太人在某个时期跨越了西奈山的沙漠地带，在埃及住过一段时间。然后，犹太人离开埃及，在沙漠中历尽艰辛，合并成一个强大的部落，并征服了一个叫巴勒斯坦的地方，建立了一个国家。这个国家为了独立而展开了长达几个世纪的战争，然后被马其顿国王亚历山大吞并，之后又变成大罗马帝国一个小省的一部分。

不过，“圣经”这个词直到公元四世纪才由君士坦丁堡的大主教约翰·克里索斯托发明。他把犹太人的圣书汇编称为《圣经》，也就是“书”的意思。

《圣经》的篇幅持续增加了 1000 年之久。除少数章节外，基本用希伯来语写成。但到耶稣出生时，希伯来语已不再是口头语，取代它的是阿拉米语，《旧约》中有几章先知预言就是用阿拉米语写的。

每个犹太小村庄，每座犹太小神庙，都有一些关于其历史的记载，一些热心此道的老人将它们记在兽皮或埃及莎草纸上。有时，人们会把各种律法和预言编成小册子，方便来神庙朝拜的人随手取用。公元前八世纪，





□ 十字架之树

当犹太人定居在巴勒斯坦时，这类汇编越来越多。公元前三世纪到公元前一世纪，它们被翻译成希腊语，传到了欧洲；从那以后，它们被译成世界各种文字。

至于《新约》的历史，就很简单了。基督死后头两三个世纪，卑微木匠拿撒勒（即耶稣）的信徒们，一直处于被罗马当局迫害的危险境地。他们的信息都来自手手相传的秘密小册子。成千上万类似的小册子被传抄了一遍又一遍，直至人们无法获悉其内容的真实性。在此期间，教会获得了胜利，以前受迫害的基督徒成了古罗马帝国的统治者。他们的首要任务，就是整理混乱的典籍。教会领袖召集了一群学者，他们通读了所有流行的版本，剔除了其中大部分，只保留了几部福音书和几封使徒写给远方教会成员的信。

随后是几百年的讨论和争辩。在罗马、迦太基和特鲁洛召开了多次重要的宗教会议；到基督死后 700 年，东部和西部教会都明确采用了我们现在所知道的通行的《新约》。

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 rôle 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 archæologists 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 civilisation right on top of the ruins of another that had gone before. They built large cities like Babylon and Nineveh, and more that 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 rôle 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 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.

## 2. 创世记

## CREATION

## HOW THE JEWS BELIEVED THAT THE WORLD HAD BEEN CREATED



5000 年前，在西亚所有民族中都流传着一个故事，说这个世界是在七天内创造出来的。而我们在《旧约》中看到的“创世记”的故事，是摩西死后 1000 年才写成的。当时，“唯一神”已经作为绝对无疑的既成事实而被犹太人接受。为希伯来人撰写关于万物起源故事的诗人，将创造世界的壮举说成是一个万能意志的突然表达，是他们自己部落神的功劳。他们称这个神为“耶和华”，即上天的统治者。

耶和华第一天创造了白天和黑夜；第二天创造了天空、海水、云和风；第三天创造了陆地和植物；第四天创造了太阳、星星和月亮；第五天创造了鱼儿和飞鸟；第六天创造了牛、虎和各种走兽，以及许多已经灭绝的动物，并用泥土做了一个男人，将它置于所有生物之上。耶和华对自己创造的一切很满意，第七天就休息了一天。第八天，耶和华从亚当身上取下一根肋骨，用它创造了夏娃。但是在伊甸园，夏娃听了蛇的话，和亚当一起偷吃了禁果。耶和华大怒，将亚当和夏娃逐出伊甸园。

亚当和夏娃生的头两个孩子都是男孩，大的叫该隐，小的叫亚伯，但后来该隐打死了亚伯。该隐害怕之极，就逃跑了，再也没有见过他的父母。

亚当和夏娃又生了很多孩子。渐渐地，他们的子孙开始繁衍于世，分布到了东南西北各个地方。



□ 纯洁受孕

但是，世界乱成一团糟，刚开始就出了差错。一切必须重新来过。耶和华决定毁灭所有的人，只留下挪亚。他来到挪亚面前，让他造一条船。挪亚和他的儿子们不顾邻居的嘲笑，毅然开始造船。

挪亚造好方舟之后的第七天傍晚，遵从耶和华的指示进了方舟，收起跳板，关紧了舱门。半夜，天开始下雨，接连下了40个昼夜。最后，大地一片汪洋，方舟中的挪亚及其跟随者成为这场可怕洪水中仅存的生命。

洪水退后，挪亚上了岸。挪亚和他的儿子以及他们的妻子再次成为农夫和牧民。他们和子孙、牛羊安宁地生活在一起。