

# How to Read the Bible

*by*

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STATISTICS WHICH SHOW that the majority of people have not read the Bible do not alter the fact that, in spite of its age, it is still one of the most important books in the world. It is not read because it is not really understood.

Since the year 1918 I have given about two thousand lectures and have gained experience through them. I have spoken on all kinds of subjects, on history, the sciences, history of religions, economy, but my largest audiences have invariably have been when I was to speak about the Bible, the Gospels, the Apocalypse, or about Christ. Many years ago I remember giving a lecture in the Vienna University on 'Christ as the central point of World-History.' No lecture of mine in Vienna was attended by such numbers of people.

These experiences convince me that many more people *feel* the importance of the Bible than actually read it. Those who do not read the Bible come to such lectures and turn to it when they begin to understand. I found that most interest was awakened when I was able to show that the achievements of modern science and the results of authentic research into the Bible were not contradictory.

I often said in lectures: 'Every line in the Bible can be vindicated at the forum of all the sciences.' On one occasion when I said this, someone asked: 'What about the birth of Eve from the rib of Adam?'

But this too is scientifically tenable for separation into the two sexes from an undivided male-female occurs in the embryonic process precisely at the point at which the ossification of the ribs (which are at first only cartilaginous substance) begins. With perfect accuracy the Bible describes, first, Male-Female, and then indicates the separation into the two sexes. It is true that the translations do not convey the primary or full meaning, but the original text *can* be justified at the forum of scientific knowledge.

The word 'Bible' was first applied to the sacred writings by St. John Chrysostom. He was a man of great spiritual significance, the possessor of oral tradition and having vision of his own which enabled him to know more about the events recorded in the Bible than the book itself conveys. Anyone who takes the trouble to collect all the passages in which St. John Chrysostom speaks of Lazarus, who was awakened to life by Christ will recognise at once that these are interpretations of one who knows more than what the Bible itself says. Morosow is right when he says that St. John Chrysostom was the writer of the Apocalypse

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as we have it to-day. The expression 'Bible' is therefore applied first to the Revelation of John by its own writer.

The Bible text itself interprets the word 'Bible' (The Books) in a definite sense, inasmuch as it speaks of the book of the generations. The Bible is therefore not only a printed book of paper pages but the sequence or the generations which from the very beginning are the bearers of spiritual evolution. Conceived in this sense—which is the original in authentic interpretation—nobody can be uninterested in the Bible. For even those 'modernists' who, like Dr. Faust, would like to put the Bible behind the stove cannot be altogether uninterested in the sequence of the generations.

In essentials, the Bible has come down to us in two languages: the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek. It must be added that certain verses were transmitted in Aramaic and that there are other versions in different languages.

That the New Testament was transmitted in Greek is connected with the fact that by reason of their culture the Greeks were of all peoples the best fitted to understand Christianity, especially the Resurrection. The Hebrews, however, were most able to understand the physical preparation of the embodiment of the Logos through the generations. Again here it is easy to see why the Old Testament was transmitted in Hebrew.

Although the Bible itself speaks only of seventy-two nations and the Temple of the Holy Grail of only seventy-two 'choirs' (in the sense of the Chapels, sub-divisions of the round building in the midst of which stands the altar of the spirit of humanity), at the present time the Bible has already been translated into hundreds more languages and dialects. Nevertheless, expert classification of the languages shows that the number of the actual languages is about seventy-two.

Another problem that has always made people dubious as to the reliability of the Bible is its chronology. The origin of the world, the story of the Creation is placed far too near to the present age. Geological investigations and even epochs that can be surveyed historically point to much earlier periods than are indicated in the Bible. Misunderstandings are at the bottom of these objections. Obviously there could be no 'day' before there was a sun and an earth. The 'days' of Creation are therefore not days. But the Hebrew word does not mean 'day' at all. It means 'a Being ruling an epoch,' just as the Latin word *Deus* is contained in this 'day' (Tag). It is not therefore a matter of single days but of vast epochs. Neither do names in the time before Abraham denote individual men but peoples and groups of peoples. Sem stands for Semites, Japhet for Japhetites, Ham for Hamites, meaning groups of peoples. The things must be observed in biblical chronology. When the ten Patriarchs are spoken of, precessions of epochs are meant, that is to say, vast periods of time of which we have repeatedly spoken in *The Present Age*. In an article on the Babylonian Gods we showed that

the Tenth Patriarch was the leader at the time of the Great Flood, or the Ice Age. Read aright, the Bible is accurate everywhere. And we can only wonder how it was possible at the time of its gradual compilation for men to have all the knowledge that it contains.

Further confusion, not only in biblical but in all other chronologies, is due to the fact that people have not always ascertained according to which particular system the given author is calculating. Antiquity calculated sometimes in sun-years, sometimes in moon-years, but also, sometimes, in years of the duration of pregnancy, i.e. ten lunar or ten solar months.

Clement of Alexandria speaks of 5,625 years from the Creation to the Birth of Christ. But he does not add that the years according to which he calculates are of ten months' duration and that therefore the period of time mentioned by him is 4,192 years and seven months, calculated on the basis of solar years.

The basic Hebraic text of the Bible gives the following figures:

Creation until the great Flood	1,656 years
From then until Abraham's 75th year	427 "
Abraham's 75th year until the exodus from Egypt	615 "
Exodus from Egypt until the third year of King Solomon's reign	480 "
From then until the second year of the Cyrus	477 "
From then until the Birth of Christ	537 "
Total	4,192 solar yrs.

There is really no contradiction between the different chronologies. It is only that each takes as unit a different length of the year. (Compare, *Zeitrechnung der Völker*, p. 231. *Lehrbuch der Sternkunde*, by Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert, Erlangen, 1847.)

Now 4,192 solar years correspond to 4,320 lunar years—again a period on which other chronologies are based. It is therefore a question of knowing according to which system one is working.

Naturally, the modern reader will ask: How are we to picture the age of the world as only 4,192 solar years? We know of historical events lying long before this time, not to mention geological and astronomical epochs. Here again there is a misunderstanding. The starting-point of biblical chronology is particular cosmic constellation in which the proximity of the earth to the sun corresponded with the autumn equinox in 180° of the ecliptic. This is the position at which all points of the earth's surface are irradiated to the same extend

by the light of the sun. The people of olden times chose this position for the starting-point of their chronology because man should belong to the surface of the earth as a whole just as the sun in this particular constellation belongs equally to the whole earth's surface, no part of this surface having advantage over another. (Compare page 234 of Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert's work quoted above.)

The Egyptians too begin their chronology at a point near to the one indicated here, differing only because they are again had another method of reckoning. (Sothis Period, 4,241 B.C.)

The chronological system on which the biblical calculation of time is based, gives as the origin of the world a moment preceding the appearance of the Messiah, when all the planets had completed harmonious numbers of revolutions. Uranus had just fulfilled its 50th revolution around the Sun, Saturn was approaching its 144th ( $12 \times 12$ ) revolution, Jupiter had completed 354 of its years, that is to say, as many revolutions as the lunar year has days; Mars had completed 2,222 revolutions, the earth 4,320 lunar years, Venus as many years as the days of the revolutions of the Moon nodes, namely, 6,793; Mercury had completed 7 times 7 as many revolutions as the lunar year has days, namely 17,364, when Christ appeared in the flesh (p. 415, *Die Urwelt und die Fixsterne*, by Gotthilf Heinrich von Schubert, Dresden, 1822).

In other words, the time from the Creation to Christ was a great cosmic Year of Jubilation which fell, not after 49 years ( $7 \times 7$ ) but after 7 times 7 revolutions of Uranus, in the 50th of these revolutions. And just as in a Year of Jubilation all debts were regarded as forgiven—an idea which made the Messiah, expected at this time, into the Redeemer.

In the sacred books of the ancient Indians we find the same idea for they speak of 4, 320 years that have passed since the time Vishnu appeared in flesh.

It is always the same figures which underlie the chronological systems of the peoples and their sacred writings and which turn out to be figures drawn from cosmic realities. And although the planet Uranus was discovered only much later on—with the physical telescope—biblical chronology is based on its rhythm. Those who can grasp these facts will feel which is more sacred: the Bible or astronomical observations through the telescope.

Men saw the great geological epochs, the true periods of Creation, projected into the shorter periods of the revolutions of the planets, moon nodes, eclipses, precessions, and the apsidal movement. And recognising the great in the small, they told the story of the seven-day week in which the Creation was accomplished. It may be easy to smile disdainfully at this. But seriousness comes when by the application of all the sciences, of history, archaeology, embryology, geology and astronomy, of comparative religion and chronology, it is realised that the Bible always contains the truth. Within the small it teaches us to recognise

the great; it was written for child-like minds knowing only the earth's weeks, months, days and years, but it is also true for the scientific mind that is familiar with cosmic years and stellar spaces.

The Bible is a book for children and for gods—intelligible to both. Should not our grown-ups, then, read and treasure it?

Confusion has also been caused in biblical chronology by the fact that an error crept into the adaption of the Roman calendar to the Christian. Varro's figures were taken, instead of those of Quintus Fabius Pictor. The latter places the founding of Rome in the first year of the 8th Olympiad, which would correspond to the year 747 B.C. Varro, however, places it in the third year of the 7th Olympiad, which would correspond to 753 B.C. This erroneous data is still given in modern school text-books which are completely perplexed when they thus have to place Christ's Birth in a year other than that with which our time-reckoning begins. But this dilemma vanishes as soon as we follow the learned ambassador of the Delphic Oracle, Quintus Fabius Pictor, who, in agreement with the inception of the ear of Nebuchadnezzar, gives the correct figure, 747. In 747 B.C., the sun rose at the vernal equinox in the central degree of the constellation of Aries and this is the astronomical point on which the Christian time-reckoning is based; it is from this point onwards that there entered the epoch of the Lamb who bears the sins of the world.

The Birth of Christ therefore fell in the 747th year after the founding of Rome, and His death on Friday, the 3rd April, in the year A.D. 33. The accuracy of this date is also confirmed by Dante who based upon it the whole chronology of his Divine Comedy. Scientific proof that this was the year in which Christ died, on Good Friday, the 3rd April, has been given by Friedrich Westberg in a splendid work entitled *Biblical Chronology according to Flavius Josephus, and the Year of Jesus' Death*. (*Die Biblische Chronologie nach Flavius Josephus und das Todesjahr Jesu*, Leipzig, 1910.) All the indications that we possess are the quoted, compared and calculated, over 202 pages.

Therewith we have, by way of introduction, given the material which shows that the 'errors' and 'contradictions' in the Bible are cleared up when we have a right approach to this document of mankind. Only those who are willing to bring all the sciences to their aid and judge it out of the total knowledge possessed by mankind will be able to do justice to this Book of Books; this living stream of the generations.