

## The Word and the Image

The Holy Bible has become a flesh and blood of this world. For a long time, its circulation keeps the top position in the world. It has been translated to more than 1,800 languages. It has been studied and commented on countless occasions. However, it's really strange that this Book after accompanying the mankind for centuries still exists as a plain text without systematic well-established tradition of illustration.

Why do the Word and the Image do not follow one another hand-in-hand? Is it an ancient ban to depict the Maker?

About 2,000 years has passed since the One Born in Bethlehem lifted this prohibition by bringing down to the Earth the Image of Unimaginable. One may think that River of Time washed away from us an ability to recreate in the reality Biblical events forever and the Holy Text would remain just a chain of words, resurrecting images in our imagination only.

Many artists (e.g., such as Albrecht Durer, Gustave Doré, Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld, et al.) have turned to the scenes from the Holy Bible (as well as to the whole text of it) as inspiration in their works. However, the latter always carried imprint of their personal perception and style. Even the collective memory of the people and religious groups and their legends were unable to preserve the Historical Memory and relate the Word and the Image. Many of the ethnicities that took part in the Biblical events, such as Chaldeans, Canaanites, Phoenicians, are gone forever. The People of the Book – People of Israel – the only survived successor and witness of these events, irreversibly changed its outlook and lifestyle over millennia of its scattering all over the world. Unfortunately they also preserved for themselves their own old ban on the depiction of the image.

The Church, that spread all over there world and travelled like a ship across the sea of time, has created its own canon of the Image. Primarily, it governs icons. Of course, local habits and culture of the people, that entered the Church, placed their own indelible imprint at this canon. It was only archeology that attempted to restore real Biblical places, events, and images of the participants.

The only other witness is the Holy Land itself, where much is still the same, frozen up to this very moment or, at least, up to the end of the 19-th century.

One might think that the 20-th century urbanization has erased from the face of the earth the last pictures of the Biblical events. However, the Divine Providence, that does not allow the breakage of the chain of the witnessing, gave us the tool to preserve our visual memory. It can withstand our technical civilization that mercilessly destroys our past. It is photography. It was invented at the very moment when the image of the Holy Land was still intact.

Hebrew, the first language of the Bible, spells "photography" as "Tsilum - צילום", which stems out of the root "Tselem - צלם", meaning "Image", the same as in the beginning of the Book of Genesis: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness". This is how the Man, the king and the image of the world, has been created.

The new edition of the holy Bible, prepared by SACRALION publishing house in the course of SACRUM SCRIPTUM international project, includes 365 pictures, 365 simple and unbiased witnesses of the ancient time. The fate of each of these pictures is a history itself.



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These pictures are spread over the whole Holy Scripture. They correspond to the certain places in the text and create unostentatious yet unequivocally convincing feeling of the presence in the resurrected reality of the Holy Bible.

Here is a camel flock drinking water from the hollowed out drinking bowl, right at your outstretched arm distance.

Here is a chiding grove near Hebron, where the forefathers lived.

Here are the caves near Jerusalem, where the prophets were buried.

The shepherds are herding sheep in the valley, where young red-haired David did the same before he became the King.

Fishermen are fishing in Lake Genesareth at the same place, where long time ago a young rabbi from Nazareth boarded one of these fish boats.

We enter this book, and it enters us, too. As always, the God is revealed to us everywhere where there are eyes capable to see, hearts capable to feel, minds capable to comprehend.

The Holy Bible named as the New Illustrated Bible of Jerusalem (NIBJ) is a reminder to the mankind that Biblical events are not something that belong to the past only. The revelation is going on now. History continues. It stems out of the space of the Holy Scripture, temples, sacraments, ceremonies. It stems in our life spreading from the Holy Land, center of the world, all across the universe. And all of us are both witnesses and participants.