

Eusebius: The Christian Herodotus



Eusebius of Caesarea/Pamphilus

- Born between A.D. 260–64
- A coworker of Pamphilus, he was devoted to taking care of the Library at Caesarea
- During the “Great persecution” he resided in Tyre and Egypt
- Made bishop Caesarea in A.D. 313
- Was an early supporter of Arius
- He is especially noted for the various works he produced
- He died c. A.D. 340, shortly after the time of Constantine

Caesarea Maritima



Chronicle
Oration of the Emperor Constantine Which He
Addressed to the Assembly of the Saints
Commentary on Isaiah
Commentary on the Psalms
Demonstration of the Gospel
Ecclesiastical Theology
Extracts from the Prophets
Against Hierocles
Ecclesiastical History
Praise of Constantine
Against Marcellus
The Martyrs of Palestine
Onomasticon
Preparation for the Gospel
Divine Manifestation
Life of Constantine

2

202nd OLYMPIAD [=A.D. 29–32]

202.1

[2045] [not in Ar.] The beginning of the 81st Jubilee, according to the Hebrews.

Jesus Christ, the son of God, announced the road to salvation for everyone, and performed the miracles which are written in the gospels.

202.2

[2046] [2045 in Ar.] Jesus Christ, the son of God, revealed to his disciples the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and commanded them to proclaim to all nations the message of conversion to God ["and to the laws of his kingdom" - Ar.].

202.3

[2047] [2048 in Ar.] Jesus Christ, in accordance with the prophecies which were spoken about him, went to his passion in the 18th [or "19th" - Ar.] year of Tiberius, and we have found the following things written about this year in the histories of the gentiles [or "Greeks" - Ar.] : there was an eclipse of the sun, Bithynia was devastated by an earthquake, and many buildings in the city of Nicaea were destroyed. All this coincides with the events of the passion of our Saviour. Phlegon, in the 13th book of his admirable account of the Olympiads, writes about this as follows: "In the fourth year of the 202nd Olympiad, there was an eclipse of the sun, greater than any which had occurred previously. At the sixth hour, the day became as dark as night, and the stars were visible in the sky. An earthquake in Bithynia destroyed many buildings in Nicaea." Proof that the passion of our Saviour happened in this year is provided by the gospel of John, who write that our Lord taught for three years after the 15th year of Tiberius. And Josephus, the native historian of the Jews, relates that around this time, on the day of Pentecost, first the priests noticed some movement and noise, and then a voice suddenly burst forth from the innermost sanctuary of the temple, saying "Let us move out of here". Josephus also says that in the same year the governor Pilatus secretly by night set up some statues of Caesar in the temple ["where it was not right for them to be" - Ar.], and this was the first cause of rebellion and disturbances amongst the Jews.

Life of Constantine



It was but recently the whole human race celebrated various ten-year periods for the great Emperor with festive banquets. It was but recently we ourselves hymned the conqueror with praises for his twenty years, taking the floor at the Council of God's ministers. Just now we wove garlands of words also for his thirty years, in the very palace hardly yesterday to crown his sacred head. (2) But today our thought stands helpless, longing to express some of the conventional things, but at a loss which way to turn, stunned by the sheer wonder of the amazing spectacle. Wherever it casts its gaze, whether east or west, whether all over the earth or up to heaven itself, every way and everywhere it observes the Blessed One present with the Empire itself. (3) On earth it perceives his own sons like new lamps filling the whole with his radiance, and himself powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons. If previously they still shared the honour of Caesars, now that they have put on his whole mantle of Godfearing virtue, they have been declared Imperatores Augusti, singled out with their father's honours.

Biblical and Exegetical Works

Onomasticon

- Alphabetical index of biblical place-names with geographical and historical comments
- To date it is the most important historical source for the “Holy Land”

Commentary on Psalms & Commentary on Isaiah Gospel Problems and Solutions



Onomasticon

letter **B**

Eusebius

Jerome

From Genesis

Babel (Gen. 11: 9). Babylon. It is translated “confusion.” It was a city of the kingdom of the giant Nimrod, where the tongues of people who planned the tower were confused, whose ruler, Josephus says, was Nimrod. The same man cites the Greek Sibyl as evidence for the history of the tower, writing thus: “The place where they built the tower is now called Babylon because of the confusion of the former language. For the Hebrews call confusion Babel” (*Ant.* 1: 115-119). The Sibyl mentions the tower and the differences of people’s language, writing as follows:

When all people spoke alike, some of them built a very high tower, so as to climb up to heaven. The gods sent winds and blew the tower down, and gave each one a different language. Because of this they came to call the city Babylon (*Ant.* 1:120-1).

Baithel (Gen. 12: 8). Now it is a village 12 miles away from Aila on the way to Neapolis, on the right. It was originally called Oulanmaous and Louza [I]. It fell to the tribe of Benjamin. Near Bethaun and Gai [I]. Joshua also attacked it, killing its king.

From Genesis

Babel, also Babylon, means “confusion.” But it was a city of the Kingdom of Nimrod, in which those who built the tower were divided into different languages, of whom Josephus says Nimrod was the ruler. Producing the Greek Sibyl as witness to his history, “the place,” he says, “where they built the tower is now called Babylon on account of the confusion of speech of those who built the tower with all zeal; and the Hebrews call the confusion Babel.” Concerning the tower and the diversity of languages the Sibyl also writes as follows:

When all mortals used one tongue, some of them built a very high tower, wishing to climb to heaven thereby; so the gods sent hurricanes and winds to overturn the tower, and assigned to each of them a different language, whence it befell that the city is called Babylon.

Bethel is a village twelve miles from Aelia on the right on the way to Neapolis. It was first called Luzza [I], that is, *amigdalon*, “almond.” It fell to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin. Near Bethaun and Gai [I]. Joshua attacked it and killed the king. Further, those who follow an error of the writings of the Greeks and think that anciently it was called Ulanmaous, err greatly. For they have muddled the Hebrew word and at the same time the name of the little city. For Ulam means “before,” that is, *proteron*, while Luzza is *amigdalon*, “almond,” and has this meaning: but it was called Bethel before it was Luzza. Nor indeed do they realise that Bethaun is another town. The Hebrews think the same to be Bethel, and that from the time that golden calves were made there by Jeroboam the son of Nabat, and were adored by the ten tribes, it was called Bethaun, that is, the house of the idols, whereas previously it was called the house of God. We

Bibles for Constantine

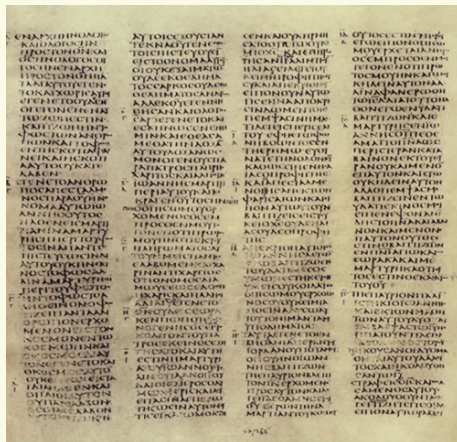
Constantine's Letter to Eusebius (V.C. 4.36)

"VICTOR CONSTANTINUS, MAXIMUS AUGUSTUS, to Eusebius.

"It happens, through the favoring providence of God our Saviour, that great numbers have united themselves to the most holy church in the city which is called by my name. It seems, therefore, highly requisite, since that city is rapidly advancing in prosperity in all other respects, that the number of churches should also be increased. Do you, therefore, receive with all readiness my determination on this behalf. I have thought it expedient to instruct your Prudence to order fifty copies of the sacred Scriptures, the provision and use of which you know to be most needful for the instruction of the Church, to be written on prepared parchment in a legible manner, and in a convenient, portable form, by professional transcribers thoroughly practiced in their art. The catholicus of the diocese has also received instructions by letter from our Clemency to be careful to furnish all things necessary for the preparation of such copies; and it will be for you to take special care that they be completed with as little delay as possible.

You have authority also, in virtue of this letter, to use two of the public carriages for their conveyance, by which arrangement the copies when fairly written will most easily be forwarded for my personal inspection; and one of the deacons of your church may be intrusted with this service, who, on his arrival here, shall experience my liberality. God preserve you, beloved brother!"

Codex Sinaiticus



Codex Vaticanus



Ancient Bibles

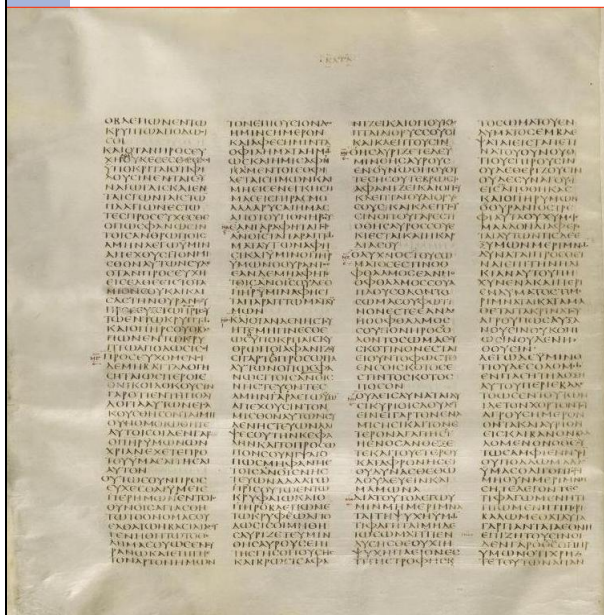


Codex Vaticanus: Ending of Luke, Beginning of John

Codex Vaticanus (B)

This Bible from the fourth century contains complete copies of all the books in the NT except part of the Epistle to the Hebrews (chaps. 9–13), all of the pastorals (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus), and Revelation. Like Codex Sinaiticus, it may have been one of the fifty Bibles commissioned by Constantine. It also may have been one of the copies prepared for the emperor Constantius by Athanasius during his exile at Rome about A.D. 341. Called the Codex Vaticanus because it resides in the Vatican Library, this Bible is written in capital Greek letters (uncial script) and is laid out with three columns of text per page.

Ancient Bibles



Codex Sinaiticus (א)

The fourth-century Codex Sinaiticus contains complete copies of every book in the NT as well as the Epistle of Barnabas, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Septuagint (LXX). It could even potentially be one of the fifty Bibles commissioned by Constantine in the year ad 331 and produced under the direction of Eusebius of Caesarea. This Bible, written with four Greek columns per page, was discovered in the 1850s at St. Catherine's Monastery in the Sinai by Constantin von Tischendorf, who took it back with him to St. Petersburg. In 1933 this codex was purchased by the British government for £100,000 and is presently housed in the British Library.

Apologetic Works

1. *Praeparatio Evangelica*

2. *Demonstratio Evangelica*

3. *Contra Hierocles*

Eusebius as Ecclesiastical Historian

Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius

Book I	Preexistence of Jesus through birth to his ascension
Book II	Life of the Early Apostles (after ascension) to beginning of Jewish Revolt
Book III	Siege of Jerusalem to the time of Ignatius and Papias
Book IV	Time of Trajan to Life of Tatian
Book V	Persecution in Gaul under Marcus Aurelius to end of the second century
Book VI	Persecution at start of third cent. (Alexandria) to time of Dionysius
Book VII	Persecution of Decius to end of the third century
Book VIII	Persecution under Diocletian
Book IX	Persecution under Diocletian to emperor Constantine
Book X	Restoration of Christianity to the Victory of Constantine over Licinius (324)

Discussion Questions

- What does Eusebius say about Christ in Book 1?
- What sources is Eusebius using and how?
- What does Eusebius say about scripture and canon?
- What does Eusebius say about the Jews?
- What stories is Eusebius reporting about the apostles?
- What stories is Eusebius reporting about the “apostolic fathers”?
- What is Eusebius saying about the heretics? Their teachings?
- What does he say about bishops and succession?

Discussion Questions

What does Eusebius say about Christ in Book 1?

Now his nature was twofold; on the one hand like the head of the body, in that he is recognized as God, on the other comparable to the feet, in that he put on for the sake of our own salvation, man of like passions with us.
Hist. eccl. 1.2.1

On the one hand he introduces the Father and Maker as a universal sovereign, commanding by his royal nod, and on the other the divine Logos-no other than him who is proclaimed by us—as secondary to him, and ministering to his Father's commands.

Hist. eccl. 1.2.5

. . . and as if he [Jesus] were of the power and wisdom of the Father, entrusted with the second rank in his universal kingdom and rule, . . . Here, too, you will perceive from the words themselves that this is none other than he who spoke also to Moses, for of him also the Scripture uses the same words, “And when the Lord saw that he drew nigh to see, the Lord called him out of the bush saying, Moses, Moses. And he said, What is it? And he said, Do not draw near here. Loose thy shoe from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. And he said to him, I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.”

Hist. eccl. 1.2.12–13

. . . he [Jesus] is honoured by his worshippers throughout the world as king, wondered at more than a prophet, and glorified as the true and only High Priest of God, and, above all, as the Logos of God, pre-existent, having his being before all ages, and having received the right of reverence from the Father, and that he is worshipped as God.

Hist. eccl. 1.3.19

Discussion Questions

What sources is Eusebius using and how? (Bks. 1–4)

Aristides (early apologist)	Melito of Sardis
Ariston of Pella	Origen
Letters of Abgar	Papias of Hierapolis
Clement of Alexandria	Philo
Clement of Rome	Pliny the Younger
Dionysius bishop of Corinth	Polycarp
Hegesippus	Polycrates bishop of Ephesus
Ignatius of Antioch	Quadratus early Apologist
Irenaeus	Tatian
Josephus	Tertullian
Julius Africanus	Theophilus of Antioch
Justin Martyr	Zephyrinus bishop of Rome

Discussion Questions

What does Eusebius say about scripture and canon?

At this point it seems reasonable to summarize the writings of the New Testament which have been quoted. In the first place should be put the holy tetrad of the Gospels. To them follows the writing of the Acts of the Apostles. After this should be reckoned the Epistles of Paul. Following them the Epistle of John called the first, and in the same way should be recognized the Epistle of Peter. In addition to these should be put, if it seem desirable, the Revelation of John, the arguments concerning which we will expound at the proper time. These belong to the Recognized Books. Of the Disputed Books which are nevertheless known to most are the Epistle called of James, that of Jude, the second Epistle of Peter, and the so-called second and third Epistles of John which may be the work of the evangelist or of some other with the same name. Among the books which are not genuine must be reckoned the Acts of Paul, the work entitled the Shepherd, the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to them the letter called of Barnabas and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles. And in addition, as I said, the Revelation of John, if this view prevail. For, as I said, some reject it, but others count it among the Recognized Books.

Hist.eccl. 3.25.1–5

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Hist.eccl. 3.25.1–5

Accordingly when I came to the east and reached the place where these things were preached and done, and learnt accurately the books of the Old Testament, I set down the facts and sent them to you. These are their names: five books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Joshua the son of Nun, Judges, Ruth, four books of Kingdoms, two books of Chronicles, the Psalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon and his Wisdom, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, Job, the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Twelve in a single book, Daniel, Ezekiel, Ezra. From these I have made extracts and compiled them in six books.

Melito of Sardis in Hist.eccl. 4.26.13–14

Discussion Questions

- What does Eusebius say about the Jews?
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