THE BIBLE CODE

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4 God warns us that: "... the time will come when they [men] will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." Believe me, that time has come. The latest gimmick is the Bible codes fad, which fits right in with the New Age/old occult dogmatism¹ we've focused on in this issue.

Bible codes are nothing new. The old term for Bible codes is gemattria, the idea that letters can be assigned numbers and that the numbers can then be manipulated to produce additional or "hidden" meaning. The latest scam is to arrange all the letters in the Hebrew Old Testament, (whose alphabet has all the vowels though most Hebrew words do not use them,) in a matrix or table, like the acrostic word search puzzles printed in the newspapers. The Hebrew case is complicated by the fact that vowels can be inserted between the letters. For example, suppose that the sequence of letters includes a "b" followed by a "t." Inserting a vowel between the letters give us 5 possible words, namely, bat, bet, bit, bot (a type of fly), and but. But that's not all. The sequence bt can also start and end with a vowel which adds 8 more words, namely: abate, abet, abut, obit, bate, beta, bite, and the computer term, byte. Doing this we can claim that the Bible "knew" the word byte long ago. Of course, there could be two vowels instead of one, so we can add words like beet, boot, boat, beat, bait, and bout. So from two letters I picked at random, bt. we can generate at least 19 possible words. Can sentences be far behind?

The latest fray was stirred by Michael Drosnin, author of *The Bible Code* which has reached the best seller lists with its dramatic outlook of the future. Drosnin claims that he found the Gulf War and the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in his analysis. Drosnin has sensationalized the findings of Professor Eliyahu Rips and other mathematicians at Hebrew University in Israel. They claimed to have found

A dogma is something one believes in total lack of evidence, doctrine is that which is believed on the basis of reasonable evidence. The two concepts are grossly confused these days in the absence of pastors who are serious students of the Bible instead of being students of Bible criticsm — higher or lower.

the names of twentieth century personages in the *Torah*, which is the Pentateuch, but they make no claims of the fantastic nature claimed by Drosnin. They call Drosnin a fraud, though.

To recognize the spirit behind Bible codes, let's imagine that the phrase in the Bible is "by the LORD" which, eliminating the vowels, becomes "bthlrd." One possible "code" is "boo the Lord." Another is "be the Lord." Clearly, neither is acceptable theologically, but both are equally valid. Since the search of words can be vertical or horizontal (see the clipping below which is from Drosnin and published in an article by C. L. Grossman which appeared in the June 4, 1997 issue of USA Today), adjusting the width of the table will give an entirely new set of word vertically. Have any looked diagonally? How about backwards? The method is of dubious scientific value at best. Remember, hindsight is 20-20, for who would have equated Watergate (see clipping below) with Richard Nixon in 1960 or in 1968 or even in 1972? And what other words are in the acrostic? So even its prophetic value is extremely limited, if it exists at all.



The ultimate question is whether or not Bible codes are Scriptural. In 2 Peter 1:20 God warns that "no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation." In other words, not only cannot prophecies be copyrighted, but they cannot be restricted in access to a privileged few such as mathematicians with a special method of interpretation. The holy Spirit of God does not need a computer or acrostics to reveal the clear words of God. Furthermore, it is written in Amos 3:7 that: "Surely the

Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Are these men, Drosnin in particular, among the prophets? By his own admission he is not. Drosnin is not lead by the Spirit of the living God but by a New Age intelligent force which Drosnin variously calls an "it" or a "friend."

Consider this, if the decoders are right, then the "prophecies" amount to warnings and man can prevent them from happening. Thus it is man and not God who is ultimately in charge of the future. This kind of arrogance is the characteristic fruit of the Copernican Revolution which supposes that geocentricity is the ultimate in human egotism because man is there at the center of the universe and at the focus of God's attention. Heliocentrism, on the other hand, makes man the measure of all things and shoves God and his concern for man out of the picture. In contrast to the decoders, Daniel 9:26-27 and 11:36 state that certain events are "determined" by God and are not changeable by man.

All things considered, the Bible codes movement, like the Bible numerics of the gemattria before it, are not of God. Over the years they have been money-makers for Drosnin, Lucas, and others. And on the surface they seem God-honoring because they appear to show God's dealings with fallen man to extend to a level far above mere words. As a result many Christians, even intelligent ones such as Grant Jeffrey, have been caught up in it. But the conclusion of the matter is this: God wrote what he meant and meant what he wrote. Some material in the Bible, particularly Daniel 12:4 and Revelation 10:4, is sealed, but what was sealed was a book in Daniel, even the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ if you can receive it, and once that was unsealed, a particular proclamation remained sealed. Beyond that, the Bible does not speak of hidden knowledge. Hidden knowledge is characteristic of the occult, not of Christianity, Christians should not be concerned about "missing" revelation. The trials to come to Christians and later to the world, will take no Christian by surprise provided he has not neglected the words of life. Neither the gemattria nor the Bible codes have contributed a single thing to the revelation found in the Holy Bible, even the King James Bible. If these appeal to you, ask yourself why you would seek out more of God than he has plainly revealed to you? Is it that you want to be God or is it that you don't know God at all? Why dabble in the occult to find the truths of God? If you're that hungry for the words of God (Amos 8:11) burn your occult bibles (NIV, NASV, NKJV, etc.) and get yourself The Book, the tried and true King James Bible. Even so, come Lord Jesus.