Class 10a
Decoding the Bible Code

מ ב ו א ב א ו ל ר
י ב י א ר ב צ י ם
ב י ו ח י ה י ה ו
י ו י ת מ נ ה כ
מ ח נ ה ה נ ש א ר
ה ת ל ר ו ת י צ ק
א ש ר ח י א צ ש ה

Outline

- Recall: Features of apocalyptic prophecy
- The Bible Code - method or thesis
- Patterns in nature, patterns in texts
- Problems with the Bible code

Apocalyptic
Definition

- *Apocalypsis* means "revelation" or "unveiling"
- It is used for a genre of literature with particular prophetic features

Apocalyptic
Features

- Social context: crisis

- Method: hidden transcript
  - an ancient sage interprets dreams, symbols and visions to predict the "future"
  - that "future" in the story is the "present" of the author

- Rhetorical tone: absolute urgency (the end is NOW)

- Complex of mythic features
  - God is Lord of history (sage often taken on tour of time or space)
  - Two ages (present evil, future good – return to paradise)
  - Dualistic ethics (you are either good or evil; no gray area)
  - Binary cosmology (heaven and earth are synchronized)
  - Esoteric language of visions and symbols (the hidden transcript)

Apocalyptic
Themes

- assurance that the world and time were ordered rather than chaotic

- consolation that suffering would end soon

- promise that those who persevere will be rewarded

One Typical Esoteric Symbol:
Numerology or Gematria

The study of the hidden meaning of words based on the numerical value of the letters.

Premises:

- Creation is ordered, and patterns of significance are embedded in nature

- Names are integrally tied to one's identity or significance

- Letters have numerical values

One Typical Esoteric Symbol:
Numerology or Gematria

Daniel 9

9:1 In the first year of Darius son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, perceived in the books the number of years that, according to the word of the LORD to the prophet Jeremiah, must be fulfilled for the devastation of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.

24 "Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city: to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place.

Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10: 70 years
> 587 BCE First Temple destroyed → 517 BCE Second Temple built

Daniel reinterprets: 70 *weeks of* years (70 x 7 = 490)
> 587 BCE First Temple destroyed → 164 BCE End of Antioches IV's persecution (actually, only 423 years, not 490)
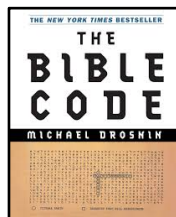

One Typical Esoteric Symbol:
Numerology or Gematria

Matthew 1:17

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

The Bible Code

- Published 1997 by Michael Drosnin
- Based on a computer program developed by Eliyahu Rips

Patterns in Nature, Patterns in Texts

- Based on a transcendental cosmology
  - Patterns in nature signal a pattern-er
  - Subordination of contemporary events to a sacred metatext
  - In this sense, analogous to (though opposite of) conspiracy theories
    - *Conspiracy Theories*
    - *Michael Barkun, political scientist and student of apocalyptic movements*
      - universe is governed by design; nothing happens by accident
      - nothing is as it seems or as we are told
      - they usually involve illegal or harmful acts
      - they absorb evidence against them and so become unfalsifiable
    - *How the Bible Code differs*
      - Shares the premise of a design that governs the universe
      - But messages are both available (now) and helpful

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- Roots in Jewish mysticism

- Deeper roots in prophecy and apocalyptic

- What is new is the application to texts as fixed sequences of letters

The Torah or Bible Code
Method

In your small group, define the Bible code method.

- What language is it based in?

- How does it "work"?

- What is the relation of computers to the method?

- How is interpretation involved?

YITZHAK RABIN

AMIR

NAME OF ASSASSIN WHO WILL ASSASSINATE

NAME OF ASSASSIN

The Torah or Bible Code
Problems