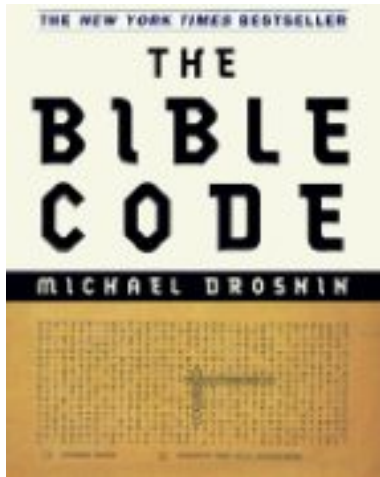


THE BIBLE CODE 2: THE COUNTDOWN



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In 1994, three Israeli mathematicians announced the results of an experimental analysis of equidistant letter codes in the earliest Hebrew text of Genesis, the first book of the Torah.

By analyzing letters at various set intervals (e.g., every 50th letter, every 65th letter), the scientists determined that words, names, and dates occurred with a frequency that could not be called random. Their confirmation of these hidden messages caused something of a stir at the time because their research was accepted for publication by "Statistical Science", a respected, juried scholarly journal. In May, 1997, Michael Drosnin, a former reporter for "The Washington Post" and "The Wall Street Journal" and best-selling author ("Citizen Hughes"), considered the implications of these startling messages, coupling a popularized account of the original research with assertions that the "uncoded" messages accurately predict many significant events of contemporary times. "The Bible Code" promptly zoomed to the top of the bestseller lists and just as promptly sparked a vigorous critical debate. Enthusiasts praise it as proof of scripture's divine authorship, crediting its roots to the numerology that has long been an acceptable part of Jewish textual tradition. Critics, and they include the scientists who performed the original research, point out that, since one must know the encoded information you are looking for before it can be found in the text, the method cannot be used to foretell the future. Although no one has discovered a fatal flaw in the original research, the debate over its significance has taken on new life, fueled in no small part by the appearance of "The Bible Code" and the interest it appears to hold for the American reading public.