



## Whose report are you going to believe?

As a writer of fiction, I exercise a bit of creative license in developing scenarios that walk a thin line between truth and deceit. And that line becomes fuzzier still when you stir the pot with a brew of differing political, cultural and religious viewpoints. As you'll see demonstrated throughout the novel, what may seem to you like solid, empirical truth can quickly take on a very subjective quality as it becomes filtered through the lenses of those with differing viewpoints, ideals and morals.

In recent years, our society has shifted to become much more focused on the wants of the individual rather than the needs of the community as a whole. As a result, the razor-sharp line that once existed between what was right and what was wrong seems to become further dulled with each new voice that clamors for attention on MySpace, Facebook or the thousands of other blogs and social media outlets that pander to the *me-too* generation's whims. But don't get me wrong; unrestricted freedom of individual expression is not necessarily a bad thing. Without it, I'd never be able to cobble together a credible, well-documented storyline for each of the differing viewpoints expressed by the main characters in the story!

## Inaccuracies in the Bible?

In a similar fashion, Biblical truths can easily become misinterpreted when viewed through the oft times myopic filter of incorrect religious beliefs or ideologies. I've often mused that you could take nearly any topic of controversy and construct a very compelling and convincing argument for or against it, depending upon the particular version of the Bible that is referenced, along with the religious and secular resources chosen to back your position. You see this dynamic happening in Christian churches of all denominations each and every Sunday. Clergy and laymen alike eagerly pull a verse or two from the Bible and string them together with other seemingly related ones, usually taken out of context. They'll even throw in an interesting and persuasive historical reference or two as further proof to back whatever new revelation they'd like you to buy into today. And with a certain percentage of their listeners, they'll win their argument every time.

That's also the fundamental problem. '*Good and evil*' or '*right and wrong*' are **not** subjective concepts. They don't vary from situation to situation, and they should never be defined within the context of any individual's personal agenda, feelings or angst. This is the true foundation of an objective Christian worldview. That being said, we see gross injustices happening every day on our planet. Some would question why a loving God would allow such infractions to exist. The Bible itself records events that would appear on the surface to be quite barbaric and unconscionable, along with others that seem ridiculously contradictory to recorded history.

But before you get too defensive, or shrug it all off as 'God works in mysterious ways'—or something equally as trite—stop and consider what the word *faith* really means. The Apostle Paul defines faith as simply 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen (*see Hebrews 11:1*).' And just because things don't always happen for us on cue, or unfold the way we'd like them to, that doesn't necessarily mean that we are outside of God's will; in fact, the opposite is usually the case. Furthermore, our faith must be placed in Jesus Christ alone (*see John 14:6-7*); anything less than that is merely positive thinking on our part.

That's the real difference between the 'façade of religion' and true faith in God. The former is defined and restricted by the boundaries of man's limited comprehension and abilities, while the latter entails total surrender to the infinite. As Rev. John Hawke boldly declares in the novel, I'll believe the report of the Lord any day!

## Do Bible codes really exist?

*River of Eden* includes some discussion on this subject. A Bible code (or more correctly, Torah code) is the notion that there are information patterns encrypted or encoded in the text of the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The existence of such codes has been hypothesized by students of Kaballah way back in the Middle Ages, and today you can find hundreds of books and web sites dedicated to this topic.

The primary method by which purportedly meaningful messages have been extracted is the Equidistant Letter Sequence (ELS). To obtain an ELS from a text, choose a starting point (in principle, any letter) and a skip number, also freely and possibly negative. Then, beginning at the starting point, you select letters from the text at equal spacing as given by the skip number. While I can't say that I'm sold yet on the concept of Bible codes, it certainly presents an intriguing notion.

וְלֹא יִתְּנֶנּוּ עֵלַי וְלִבְנֵה כִּי מִ  
כְּשֶׁאֶחָד בָּנִים שֶׁנִּתְּנוּ לְעֵלְהֶם  
תֵּהֱלֹךְ יִסְמַח וְנִבְנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
צוּר יִשְׂדֵי וְעַל צְבָא מִטְּהַב  
אֲשֶׁר בְּצִאֲתוֹ מִן הַמֶּדְבָּר וְ  
וְאֶתְהַאָּרְצָא שְׂרָמָא קְטָם בְּהַ  
לְאָבִי נִסְבְּנִי אֶל יָאֵבִיב וְ  
נִקְטָם וְלִבְלִי חֲטָא תָּם וְלִבְלִי

*Here are some links to ponder, pro and con:*

<http://www.bible-codes.org/>

<http://skepdic.com/bibcode.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible\\_code](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_code)

<http://www.godonthenet.net/evidence/codes.htm>