

Breaking the Romans Code

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Michael Wood

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Introducing
Biblical Cryptanalysis

Chapter 1

Breakthrough

Early in my career life I was honored to receive international recognition for designing REDOC-II which is one of the only unbreakable codes in existence today.^{1, 2, 3} At the time I had no idea that my early accomplishments in cryptography would ever provide me with a unique approach to Biblical archaeology. Yet the skillset of making and breaking codes enabled me to ultimately solve a two-thousand-year-old puzzle.

Here's how it all began. After designing the unbreakable code I was given an opportunity to apply my cryptanalytic skills to the emerging internet field. I transformed a cryptanalysis system that I had developed into programmable artificial intelligence. The resulting software instructed a computer how to decipher the information flowing through its network wires. The computer then transformed the deciphered information into a real-time blueprint of the entire worldwide physical infrastructure.⁴ Maintaining a real-time map of the network was critical to effectively manage the rapidly changing

1 The Redoc-II Encryption System (US Patent #5,003,596)

2 See *Applied Cryptography* by Bruce Schneier, pp. 311-313 for an overview of the REDOC-II code and documentation of its impenetrability.

3 The two Israelis who broke the United States' standard national code (the DES) confirmed they were unable to break REDOC-II via their method. REDOC-II proved not only to be superior to the code developed by the US National Security Agency—it proved to be unbreakable. See Eli Biham and Adi Shamir, *Differential Cryptanalysis of Snefru, Khafre, REDOC-II, LOKI and Lucifer*. *Advances in Cryptology -- CRYPTO '91*, Springer-Verlag, pp. 156-171

4 US Patent #6,108,702

infrastructure. The commercial success of this system provided the opportunity for early retirement, during which I turned my cryptanalytic attention to some personal areas of interest.

For example, I had always been intrigued by the human nervous system. The parasympathetic nerves (which shut off the stress response) cause subtle changes in the human heart rate. Through cryptanalysis I was able to use heart rate measurements to decode the precise real time level of parasympathetic activity. The cryptanalytic solution was imbedded within a stress reducing biofeedback device.⁵ The device has shown impressive results in multiple clinical trials.^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11}

The three cryptanalytic breakthroughs provided me the experience necessary to finally tackle one of the greatest historical puzzles of them all—decoding the mysteries of the Dead Sea Scrolls. I had a particular fascination with the scrolls found in cave four, because their publication was suppressed for so long. They were eventually published in 1991 by force, not willingly. And I was always curious what earth-shattering things they must contain for them to have been kept under wrap for so many decades.

However, the hoopla surrounding these scrolls quickly died down after their release for two reasons. First, no one noticed anything remarkable in them. And second, the official story caught on: “There

5 US Patent #7,691,049

6 “Effects of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia Biofeedback Versus Passive Biofeedback Control,” Leslie Sherlin, Richard Gevirtz, Sarah Wyckoff, Fred Muench, *International Journal of Stress Management*, 2009, Vol. 16, No. 3, 233–248

7 “The Effects of Respiratory Sinus Arrhythmia Biofeedback on Heart Rate Variability and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms: A Pilot Study,” Terri L. Zucker, Kristin W. Samuelson, Frederick Muench, Melanie A. Greenberg, Richard N. Gevirtz, *Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback*, DOI 10.1007/s10484-009-9085-2

8 Prinsloo, GE, Rauch, HGL, Lambert, MI, Muench, F, Noakes, TD & Derman WE (2010). The Effect of Short Duration Heart Rate Variability (HRV) Biofeedback on Cognitive Performance During Laboratory Induced Cognitive Stress. *Appl. Cognit. Psychol.* wileyonlinelibrary.com DOI: 10.1002/acp.1750

9 Ebben, MR, Kurbatov, V & Pollak, CP (2009). Moderating Laboratory Adaptation with the Use of a Heart-Rate Variability Biofeedback Device (StressEraser). *Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback*, DOI 10.1007/s10484-009-9086-1

10 Reiner, R (2008). Integrating a Portable Biofeedback Device into Clinical Practice for Patients with Anxiety Disorders: Results of a Pilot Study, *Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback*, 33, 55-61.

11 Heilman, K, Handelman, M, Lewis, G & Porges, SW (2008). Accuracy of the StressEraser® in the Detection of Cardiac Rhythms, *Appl Psychophysiol Biofeedback*, 33(2), 83-89.

never was a cover up in the first place. It just took that long to translate them because of the extra fragility of the cave four scrolls.”

But the official response only served to pique my curiosity even further. The cave four scholars had completed a handwritten concordance of the scrolls by 1960,¹² and the scholars had to translate the scrolls in order to make the concordance. The concordance was empirical proof that the official story was itself a cover up. The scrolls were translated by 1960, yet remained unpublished for more than thirty years afterwards.

I pored through the cave four scrolls for about a decade. During that time, my background allowed me to piece together some historic findings. But only recently did I discover the Granddaddy of the cave four secrets. And that is what led to the writing of this book.

Paul’s letter to the Romans is the cornerstone of modern Christianity. A correct understanding of the book relies on knowing exactly what Paul was referring to by the phrase ‘Works of the Law.’ And archeologists discovered a scroll in cave four entitled “Some Works of the Law.” This was the first time the idiomatic phrase was seen outside of Paul’s letters. Something inside me was convinced this held the key to the ultimate surprise regarding the Biblical book of Romans.

When taken in combination with Paul’s letter to the Romans, the scroll shows that the phrase ‘Works of the Law’ was a first century idiom used to refer to a specific subset of the Law. Yet the scroll was written by a religious sect called the Essenes, and Paul was trained as a Pharisee (under the tutelage of Gamaliel).¹³ So I sought to understand how the Pharisees used the idiom. Which subset of the Law did that phrase represent to them?

The breakthrough arrived the moment I came across the traditional Pharisaic legal divisions: *mitzvot bein adam lamakom* (commands between man and God) and *mitzvot bein adam lachaveiro* (commands between man and his neighbor). These were the original

¹² *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* by Geza Vermes, p. 5

¹³ Acts 22:3. NOTE: Gamaliel was the grandson of Hillel, the founder of the highly regarded Pharisaic School of Hillel.

two subsets at the time of Christ and my cryptanalytic mind began snapping together all the pieces of the puzzle. Not only did the completed puzzle reveal a stunning revelation about the book of Romans, but it also forever changes Christianity's understanding of Jesus' teachings as well. The original teaching of Romans is finally revealed. The code has been broken.

Chapter 2

Insufficient Inputs

In this book, we're going to use a revolutionary new method to understand the Bible: Biblical Cryptanalysis. Now, if you are skeptical that any new approach can yield historic results, I acknowledge and respect your reservations. After all, how can a new method uncover anything remarkable about the most analyzed text on the planet? Actually, there's a straightforward cryptographic answer to that question.

All codes, even the easiest ones, require a sufficient number of inputs before they can be solved. If a cryptographer is handed the most simplistic child's code and only a small number of input/output pairs, he still won't be able to determine the key until he has more inputs. Biblical scholars have been in a similar situation with Jesus' teachings for fifteen hundred years. Even though tremendously gifted scholars existed during these times, they've been operating off a limited number of inputs—too few to find the key. Mostly, they were missing information regarding first century Jewish culture and Law.

For example, consider the ancient Jewish idiom “to have an evil eye.” Today's English meaning for “evil eye” is extremely different from the ancient Jewish one. In first century Judea to “have an evil eye” meant “to be stingy” and “to have a good eye” meant “to be generous.” The idiom was based on eyeing material things over the needs of

others. Those with a bad eye focus on the material things.^{14, 15, 16} Those with a good eye focus on the needs of others.

With this in mind, let's take a look at how the seventeenth century King James Bible translated a sentence from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.¹⁷

The King James translation was the official Bible for almost three hundred years. So for three hundred years, Christians believed that Jesus warned against having an 'evil eye.' For three centuries, they didn't know that he was actually warning against being stingy—a different message altogether.

Before the King James Bible, the Latin Vulgate was the official Bible for almost thirteen hundred years. So how well did it do with this Hebraism?

But if thy eye be evil thy whole body shall be darksome.¹⁸

Not well. The Latin Vulgate didn't grasp the idiom either. So between the Latin Vulgate and the King James Bible, Christians were told for fifteen hundred years that Jesus warned them not to fill their bodies with darkness by having an evil eye. For fifteen hundred years, Christians didn't know what Jesus actually taught:

If your eye stingily focuses on material things, your whole body will be full of darkness.

John Calvin's writings show us how unaware the Protestant Reformers were regarding Jewish idioms. When Calvin commented on the "evil eye", he wrote:

14 *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* by Craig S. Keener (Jul 1999) p. 232. (Craig S. Keener (PhD, Duke University) is professor of Biblical studies at Palmer Theological Seminary of Eastern University.)

15 *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* by David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers, Astrid B. Beck, p. 498

16 *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (The IVP Bible Dictionary Series) by Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall p. 472. (Joel B. Green is Dean of Academic Affairs at Asbury Theological Seminary and Professor of New Testament Interpretation.)

17 Matthew 6:23 KJV

18 Matthew 6:23 Latin Vulgate

An evil eye means a diseased eye ... they shut their eyes to avoid the light which was offered to them, because they are knowingly and willingly carried after their own lusts.¹⁹

Calvin wrote authoritatively. Calvin wrote charismatically. Calvin wrote with conviction. And yet, Calvin was wrong. Again, it's not his fault. He wrote in an information vacuum and did the best he could. But unfortunately, one error begets another ... creating a negative feedback loop. By not knowing that Jesus meant 'don't be stingy,' Calvin carried forward his own erroneous concept into his interpretation of what the "darkness" meant:

darkness signifies gross and brutal affections. The meaning is, we ought not to wonder, if men wallow so disgracefully, like beasts, in the filth of vices, for they have no reason which might restrain the blind and dark lusts of the flesh.²⁰

Jesus' "don't be stingy with your belongings" has now been turned into a warning against living "disgracefully, like beasts, in the filth of vices." The snowball is rolling downhill ... fast.

The 'evil eye' passage was never a diatribe against filthy vices. Rather it was one of the most humanitarian passages in the entire Bible.

Accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye generously focuses on the needs of others, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye stingily focuses on material things, your whole body will be full of darkness.²¹

The passage discusses storing up treasures in heaven by generously sharing with those in need. In fact, this passage was seamlessly related to something that Jesus had taught before it:

But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.²²

19 *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke* by John Calvin, entry for Matthew 6:22-24

20 *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke* by John Calvin, entry for Matthew 6:22-24

21 Matthew 6:19-23

22 Matthew 6:3-4 NASB

Jesus had already discussed receiving a heavenly reward for generously sharing with those in need. And his first century audience understood how the “good eye vs. evil eye” seamlessly related to it.

But what happens when a person doesn’t know the meaning of the “good eye vs. evil eye”? How can he possibly see the seamless fluidity of the passage? He cannot, as John Calvin illustrates. When commenting on “the eye is the lamp of the body”, Calvin wrote:

We must bear in mind, as I have already hinted, that what we find here are detached sentences, and not a continued discourse.²³

This sentence is quite revealing. John Calvin had “already been hinting” that the entire sermon is a mishmash of “detached sentences, and not a continued discourse.” His lack of knowledge regarding Hebraisms caused him to view the entire sermon as a set of detached, standalone, disconnected teachings.

Now let’s think about this for a moment. As long as scholars didn’t know what the “evil eye” referred to (say, for about fifteen hundred years), it was impossible for them to look for a single unified message in the Sermon on the Mount. After all, they already ‘knew’ the sermon was a bunch of “detached sentences, and not a continued discourse.”

But it turns out that the “evil eye” wasn’t disconnected at all. In fact, it was a virtual restatement of something that Jesus had just previously taught: People store up treasures in heaven when they generously share with those in need. So is it possible that the entire sermon is a continuous discourse after all? And if it is, how can we possibly recover its original seamless fluidity? That’s where Biblical cryptanalysis comes in.

23 *Commentary on Matthew, Mark, Luke* by John Calvin, entry for Matthew 6:22-24

Chapter 3

Biblical Code Breaking

So what does cryptanalysis (the breaking of codes) have to do with the Bible anyway? Actually, it has everything to do with the Bible. Let's take a look at how a single new input combined with cryptanalysis can produce a historic result.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount uses the Koine Greek word *dikaiosune* three times. And the Jewish audience that he was addressing had a special Hebraic understanding of this word. The Jewish communities used this word as a synonym for the Hebrew word *chesed* which meant 'loving kindness.' This can be traced back as far as 200 B.C. when the Jewish scriptures were translated into Greek. The ancient translators used the Greek word *dikaiosune* in some passages when translating the Hebrew word *chesed*.²⁴

The Jewish use of *dikaiosune* as an expression of loving kindness continued to strengthen over time. By Jesus' day, *dikaiosune* was associated with charitable deeds done for others, such as giving alms to the poor.²⁵ In fact, Jesus himself used the word this way in his Sermon on the Mount:

Beware of practicing your *dikaiosune* before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So **when you give to the poor**, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by

²⁴ See Genesis 19:19, 20:13, 21:23, 24:27, 32:10 LXX

²⁵ *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* by Brad H. Young, pp. 9-10

men truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But **when you give to the poor**, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,²⁶

Giving alms to the poor was considered one of the highest acts of loving kindness. Notice that the passage describes this expression of loving kindness as “practicing your *dikaiosune*.” Now that we understand how deeply the first century Jews equated *dikaiosune* with the kind treatment of others, we are ready to perform our first Biblical cryptanalysis.

The lengthy passage below is one of the more popular passages in the New Testament. I am going to demonstrate how one new input (*dikaiosune*) combined with cryptanalysis can result in a historic Biblical finding—the recovery of an essential teaching of Jesus, which had remained unknown for fifteen hundred years.

For I say to you that unless your *dikaiosune* surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, ‘You good-for-nothing,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

26 Matthew 6:1-3 NASB with *dikaiosune* left untranslated

It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FALSE VOWS, BUT SHALL FULFILL YOUR VOWS TO THE LORD.' But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is THE CITY OF THE GREAT KING. Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no'; anything beyond these is of evil.

You have heard that it was said, 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH.' But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.²⁷

Before I reveal my cryptanalysis of this passage, let's take a look at what the first sentence means. The first sentence says:

Unless your *dikaiosune* is greater than the religious leaders you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

And from our knowledge of the *dikaiosune* Hebraism, we know this sentence means:

Unless you treat people better than the religious leaders you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

By combining just one new input (*dikosune*) with Biblical cryptanalysis, we recover the lost meaning of the passage:

²⁷ Matthew 5:20-48 NASB with *dikaiosune* left untranslated.

- You have heard ‘don’t murder’ and ‘those who murder shall be liable to the court.’
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** Anyone who is angry with his brother is liable to the court and anyone who calls his brother a name is in danger of hellfire.

- You have heard ‘don’t commit adultery.’
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** Don’t ogle a woman lustfully with your eyes or you’re already an adulterer. It would be better for you to have no eyes if you can’t stop offending your wife and the woman you are ogling.

- It was said that anyone can divorce his wife simply by giving her a certificate of divorce.
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** You can only divorce a woman if she’s been unfaithful to you. And anyone who marries the divorced unfaithful woman shares in her adultery.

- You have heard the ancients were told not to make false vows, but to fulfill vows to the Lord.
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** Just keep your word even without oaths. Let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no’. Period.

- You have heard ‘an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.’
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** Don’t take revenge on a person who injures you. Offer him assistance instead.

-
- You have heard that you should love your countrymen and hate your enemies.
 - **But I tell you that you have to treat people better than that.** You need to love your enemies and pray for those who harm you. Otherwise you will not reap the reward.

Now think about what Biblical cryptanalysis has already done. We've unified twenty-nine sentences via a single statement, and we've uncovered the lost meaning of the passage as a result. The passage had always been describing how a first century Jew could treat his neighbor better than what his religion taught; nothing more, nothing less. This opens up an entirely new understanding about Jesus and his message.

Let's take divorce as an example. In the first century, many religious leaders allowed a man to divorce his wife if he found her displeasing in any way.²⁸ Women were sent away at the whim of their husbands. Jesus wanted the husbands to treat their wives better than that. *That's* why Jesus implemented his rule. He also didn't want women to use his unfaithfulness clause to break their marriage to be with another man. He wanted the wife to treat her husband better than that. So he said that all women who are divorced under his standard of adultery can't remarry.

The motivation behind all the rules was to get his followers to start treating *everyone* better ... even women ... even foreign enemies. It's actually a beautiful passage once the code has been cracked.

28 *Meet the Rabbis: Rabbinic Thought and the Teachings of Jesus* by Brad H. Young, p. 41

Chapter 4

The Key

In cryptography, we know that we've found the key to a code when the following happens:

All known inputs + Key = Intelligible output

When all the inputs combined with the key result in intelligible output, we know we are done... we know that we have found the key. In the last chapter, we found a single statement which accounted for all twenty-nine sentences (all twenty-nine inputs). And when we combined all twenty-nine inputs with that singular statement, we got a magnified level of intelligible output. So we're done (with that passage). We've found the key.

But think what this means. For fifteen hundred years, no one knew what Jesus had actually taught: Unless you treat people better than the religious leaders, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. No one knew this particular passage taught that love of neighbor is the prerequisite to entering the kingdom of heaven. No one knew that all twenty-nine sentences contributed together to convey this one singular message.

So research into first century Jewish culture combined with old fashioned cryptanalysis yielded a historic result—and this is just one teaching. Imagine what we might discover if we found the key to the entire Sermon on the Mount! If we could find a single statement that

accounts for the sermon from beginning to end, then perhaps we'll discover that the entire sermon is very different from what Christians thought for fifteen hundred years.

What if we sought to find the key to all of Jesus' teachings on salvation and judgment in the Gospel of Matthew? Would we find that Jesus' salvation teachings were different than what Christians have thought for fifteen hundred years?

What about Paul's letter to the Romans: Is it even possible to find a single statement that encompasses every sentence in this lengthy letter from beginning to end? And if we did, would we find that the Biblical book that modern Christianity is based upon actually teaches something different than what Christians thought for fifteen hundred years?

Armed with new knowledge regarding first century culture and law, we have sufficient inputs to finally solve these three massive puzzles:

Puzzle #1: The Sermon on the Mount

Puzzle #2: The Gospel of Matthew

Puzzle #3: Romans

As you will soon see, a whole host of Biblical surprises reveal themselves at every twist and turn in solving these puzzles. Christianity is about to discover that the most essential teaching (The Sermon on the Mount) and the most essential Biblical books (Matthew and Romans) are extremely different from what Christians believed for fifteen hundred years. And Biblical cryptanalysis is going to prove it.