

Popular teacher Chuck Missler has strung together the “first ten names” of Genesis 5 and claims to have uncovered a coded message he assumes they communicate. The names are Adam-Seth-Enosh-Cainan-Mahalalel-Jared-Enoch-Methuselah-Lamech-Noah. He claims they spell out a promise/prophesy/prediction of the coming of the Messiah. The text he comes up with reads: “Man (has) Appointed Mortal Sorrow; (but) The Blessed God Shall come down Teaching, (and) His death shall bring The Despairing Comfort.”

Here are some problems with what Chuck Missler does with this text:

- 1) There's the basic issue of the nature of the Bible as a whole: its purpose is not to *hide* (the video clip speaks of a “Hidden Code”), but rather to *reveal*;
- 2) The names chosen are selective: for example, the sons born earlier to Adam (Cain and Abel) are conveniently skipped, presumably because the meanings of their names don't yield the message the modern interpreter had in mind to start with;
- 3) The meanings of the names given are arbitrary and sometimes do not conform to the divinely inspired intended meaning provided by the Bible itself (for example, for him “Noah” needs to mean “comfort”, but the Bible insists that this name was given because its intended meaning is “rest”, and refers to the hope of Noah's father that through NOAH [not a coming messianic figure!], God would give the earth some respite from the work that had become so laborious since the Fall);
- 4) The Bible never suggests that these names or the order of these names contains any hidden message—this is an assumption brought to the text by the modern interpreter;
- 5) There is no indication that any other author of the OT understood the meaning and order of these names to have messianic significance. This also holds true for Jesus, all the divinely inspired authors of the NT, and for any later church father whose writings have been preserved. It never shows up in later church history, the Reformation, either of the two Great Awakenings, etc. In other words, this modern interpreter has discovered something brand new that NO other interpreter has EVER seen before after about three and a half millennia of looking at that text;
- 6) Missler's decoded “text” contains some interesting theological/historical problems of its own making, such as “Man (has) appointed mortal sorrow.” In Scripture, it is God who decrees (“has appointed”) death upon fallen man for his rebellion—“Man” is not the one who decrees his own demise;
- 7) Missler has to add certain words to his conglomeration of names in order for it to gain coherence—the creator of this interpretation admits as much by his use of parentheses. Examples are “(has)”, “(but)”, and “(and)”. All of these words have Hebrew equivalents and could therefore have easily appeared in the divinely inspired text written by Moses, if he had intended this “hidden code” to be read as such, but they do not. The eternal and inerrant Word of God had to await the rise of Chuck Missler 3,400 years after Moses wrote in order to “complete”/“perfect” his “incomplete”/“imperfect” message!
- 8) The word-order of Missler's “text” is wildly out of order for biblical Hebrew—it is perfect English, but terrible narrative Hebrew—therefore, Moses would have had to be a poor writer in his mother-tongue, but an excellent author in a language (English) that didn't exist yet!
- 9) The most important interpretative issue is authorial intent, and there is absolutely NO indication by the original author that he intended these names to be understood as anything other than a genealogy—in fact, the actual “order” of the names as they appear in Genesis 5 destroys any continuity of message—it reads Adam-Adam-Seth-

Adam-Seth-Adam-Seth-Enosh-Seth-Enosh-Seth-Enosh-Kenan-Enosh-Kenan-Enosh-Kenan-Mahalalel-Kenan-Mahalalel-Kenan-Mahalalel-Jared-Mahalalel-Jared-Mahalalel-Jared-Enoch-Jared-Enoch-Jared-Enoch-Methuselah-Enoch-Methuselah-Enoch-Enoch-Methuselah-Lamech-Methuselah-Lamech-Methuselah-Lamech-Noah-Lamech-Noah-Lamech-Noah-Noah-Shem-Ham-Japheth. If these names were intended to be strung together as a prophecy of the coming Messiah, Moses or the Holy Spirit had a pretty bad stuttering problem. Missler overcomes this, however, by being very selective in where he starts, stops, and even in between, because he eliminates all the divinely inspired repetitions and overlaps and in essence, ends up creating his own text;

10) Communication in such opaque and enigmatic fashion guarantees that the receptor audience, or at least the vast majority of it, would NOT obtain its intended meaning, and this in turn, means that the writer has failed to communicate. Of course there are secret codes and encrypted messages used by spy agencies and the makers of children's "decoder rings," but these are highly specialized forms of communication intended for very small audiences, and it is understood by author and audience that this is the nature of that kind of communication. The books of the Bible, and especially the genre of historical narrative that dominates the book of Genesis, are simply not of that genre, so for an author to throw his audience those kinds of curve balls goes against all the rules of normal communication.

These are my thoughts anyway. A final, more loosely-related thought is that people who engage in these forms of fanciful interpretation do so because they do not have the tools to do the appropriate kind of interpretation and are therefore left to have to come up with their own sensational creations. This stuff demoralizes the Body of Christ, though, because it sends them a message that if they can't do this creative exegesis stuff, they can't really understand their own Bible. It tells them they will be forever dependent upon some person who has this kind of "special insight" into the "hidden meanings" of the Scriptures. In this way, it rechains the Bible to the pulpit. It creates cults of personality that are unhealthy for the leaders and unhealthy for the followers as well, who themselves are supposed to be in the process of getting equipped to serve as a priesthood of believers who are capable of doing the work of ministry (Eph. 2:11-14).

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