

exotic and arbitrary exegetical approaches to Scripture. This was encouraged especially by the last four rules given by Rabbi Eliezer:

29. *Gematria*: a) computation of the numerical value of letters; b) secret alphabets or substitution of letters for other letters.
30. *Notrikon*: breaking up a word into two or more, exposition of the single letters to stand for just as many words which commence with them. (*acrostic*)
31. *Mukdam shehu' me'utar ba-Yanan*: something that precedes which is placed second.
32. *Mukdam u-me'utar shehu' beparashioth*: many a biblical section refers to a later period than the one which precedes, and vice-versa.

We should observe that such approaches have a perennial popularity in some circles. For example, consider the book by Jerry Lucas, Theomatics. - Particularly uses Gematria

- c. Peshar interpretation-- "peshar" comes from an Aramaic word meaning "solution" or "interpretation." This approach to interpretation has been associated especially with the Qumran covenanters. Longenecker states:

"The Dead Sea sectarians considered themselves to be the divinely elected community of the final generation of the present age, living in the days of "messianic travail" before the eschatological consummation. Theirs was the task of preparing for the coming of the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come. And to them applied certain prophecies in the Old Testament which were considered to speak of their situation and circumstances" (p. 38).

It was not that the covenanters understood the OT prophecies as words from God which applied to earlier situations and were now further to be applied to their own situation. Rather, they understood the prophecies to have exclusive reference to their own circumstances. *No distinction between interpretation and application, between what it meant and what it means*

Moreover, the members of the sect believed that the proper interpretation (*peshar*) came by revelation as well as the original prophecy. F.F. Bruce (Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts) states:

"This principle, that the divine purpose cannot be properly understood until the *peshar* has been revealed as well as the *raz*, underlies the biblical exegesis in the Qumran commentaries. The *raz* was communicated by God to the prophet, but the meaning of that communication remained sealed until its *peshar* was made known by God to His chosen interpreter. The chosen interpreter was the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder of the Qumran community" (p. 9).