

ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON POSSIBLE LIFE BEYOND EARTH

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INTRODUCTION

How did life on earth originate? Is there life on other planets? These are but a few timeless questions that people have always wondered about. Many people in the world today have excluded God as an explanation for the origin of life, instead believing that life on earth - as well as possible life on distant planets - is the result of blind chance. However, the last several decades have revealed scientific insights that provide overwhelming evidence that life on earth was designed by an incredible intelligence, but due to an unwillingness to consider the possibility of God many have come to the conclusion that an advanced race of extraterrestrial beings are responsible for having created life on earth.

We need to thoughtfully consider several questions: Is it possible for life to have evolved apart from intelligent design? Is there any evidence for advanced life beyond earth? If advanced life beyond earth exists, is it even remotely plausible that these beings could reach us or communicate with us in any way? Is the modern UFO phenomenon plausible? If the UFO phenomenon has credibility, are there any explanations for it besides being the spaceships of flesh and blood extraterrestrials? Last but most important of all, what is the real issue in this attempt to link the origin of life with the belief in extraterrestrial creators? Before examining these questions, however, let us first consider the history of belief in extraterrestrial life and the factors behind the rising interest in aliens and UFO's.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

The most ancient civilizations of the world likely looked to the sky and wondered if there was anybody else out there. As far as we know the ancient Greeks were the first to thoughtfully consider the possibility that the universe could be inhabited by other physical beings similar to us. The philosopher Thales and his student Anaximander - who lived approximately six centuries before Christ - were the first to propose the extraterrestrial hypothesis, although the term itself is a modern one and would not have been used by them. The extraterrestrial hypothesis is the belief that since life evolved here on earth, then life must have evolved abundantly throughout the universe and human beings are really nothing special but instead are merely one of countless advanced civilizations throughout the cosmos. The extraterrestrial hypothesis fits very well with atheism, and not surprisingly Anaximander proposed a belief system concerning how life could have begun spontaneously and naturalistically apart from God. He taught that the first animals to appear were marine creatures, which is correct according to both **GENESIS** and modern science, but he also taught that these creatures formed spontaneously out of mud, which is obviously not in line with either the Bible or proven science. Many today believe that naturalistic evolution was developed by Charles Darwin in the middle of the nineteenth century, and that the extraterrestrial hypothesis began with the science fiction genius H.G. Wells near the end of the same century, yet both of these ideas originated in the ancient world with Thales and Anaximander. It is even possible that others in ages past came up with these ideas before them. King Solomon, who lived approximately three centuries before the time of Thales and Anaximander, tells us in

ECCLESIASTES 1:9 that we should not be surprised about this:

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.

Both Islam and Hinduism are believed by many to support the belief in life on other worlds, although neither offer undisputed evidence for that belief. The Quran, which is the holy book of Islam, may address the issue in verse 29 of chapter 42:

Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and of whatever living creatures He has spread forth in both.

Several scholars during the Enlightenment period (1400-1600 AD) entertained the idea of physical life on other planets. The best known of these was Giordano Bruno, who was eventually burned at the stake for his many unorthodox beliefs. Among eighteenth and nineteenth century thinkers, William Herschel - the discoverer of Uranus - was convinced that the universe was teeming with advanced civilizations. Other notable names from this period who believed strongly in alien worlds were German philosopher Immanuel Kant and American statesman and scientist Benjamin Franklin.

The idea of life on other planets and how it originated became an increasingly popular idea in the twentieth century. A recent idea that is closely related to the extraterrestrial hypothesis is panspermia. Panspermia is the belief that life is an inherent part of the universe in which the "seeds of life" or simple cells are spread to habitable planets by comets or meteorites. According to those who believe in the theory, earth was "seeded" approximately 3.8 billion years ago, and evolution took off from there and has resulted in the incredibly diverse life forms that have been part of earth's history. Other planets were seeded earlier and have likely produced alien civilizations throughout the cosmos - some very advanced in comparison to us because they have had an evolutionary "head start" - whereas some planets were seeded relatively recently and have not had time for evolution to produce sentient or thinking beings. This idea is different from the extraterrestrial hypothesis, in which life springs forth frequently throughout the universe independently on various planets, in that panspermia relies on simple cells being carried in some manner throughout space to the various planets in order to begin the evolutionary process. The panspermia idea was first proposed by Svante Arrhenius (1859-1927), a chemist and Nobel Laureate from Sweden. However, it was Chandra Wickramasinghe, the Director of the Center of Astrobiology, and Sir Fred Hoyle, the British astrophysicist who coined the term "the Big Bang", who really popularized the idea in recent times. Wickramasinghe and Hoyle eventually came to realize that due to their incredible complexity even the simplest life forms could not have arisen apart from intelligent design, and they also came to realize that the chance of life existing in outer space for any reasonable length of time was highly unlikely. Rather than turning to the God of the Bible, however, they opted for pantheism. Pantheism is the idea that God is the universe and the universe is God. Closely related to panspermia is directed panspermia, which is also known as exogenesis. This is the belief that simple cells are transported to planets intentionally by highly advanced alien civilizations. Sir Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of DNA, is the most well-known scientist to accept exogenesis, which was easily integrated with his atheistic belief system.

Today, in our high-tech twenty-first century world we are still considering the question of the existence of life on other planets, and how that life may have originated. The question is simultaneously fascinating and controversial. Human beings, who are curious by design, cannot help but wonder if we are alone in the universe.

FACTORS BEHIND THE RISING INTEREST IN ALIENS & UFO'S

The UFO phenomenon has been steadily increasing in popularity and acceptance over the past several decades. Prior to World War II people often scoffed at the idea of UFO's being

spaceships from other worlds. That mindset has changed dramatically. According to polls, most people throughout the world are very open to the possibility of extraterrestrial life and UFO encounters, with some surveys estimating that over 80% of people in the Western nations believe that life exists on other planets. Polls in America indicate that approximately 20 million people have seen a UFO, and four million claim to have been abducted by aliens. Two major factors are behind this changing belief. First, and perhaps most important of all, is the influence of Hollywood. Wildly popular movies and television programs featuring extraterrestrials and their spaceships have captivated audiences worldwide, and some say have even preconditioned us to accept without question the existence of life on other planets. Movies such as **ET**, **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**, **ALIEN**, **INDEPENDENCE DAY** and the **STAR WARS** series are only a few out of literally hundreds. Television programs such as **STAR TREK** and the **X-FILES** have had a major impact on our belief in "life out there", and both television series have spawned big-budget movie versions as well. The movies **STARGATE** and **ALIEN VERSUS PREDATOR** promote the Ancient Astronaut Theory, to be discussed shortly. According to the article **ALIENS IN YOUR BEDROOM?** by Gary Bates as found in Creation magazine 27:2, over 70% of all movie box office receipts at any given time come from the science fiction and fantasy genre. As a society we are so steeped in the belief in extraterrestrial life that many take it for granted that we are not alone in the universe. In addition to movies and television programs, the past decade has seen a rise in the number of weekly documentary-type programs focusing on the UFO phenomenon. The Discovery Channel and the History Channel regularly feature programs that explore this subject.

The second major reason - which is inseparable from the first reason - is the influence of the science fiction literary genre. Many of the great science fiction writers of the twentieth century have promoted the extraterrestrial hypothesis in their works, and not surprisingly many of these science fiction writers were devout atheists. Among the great writers of modern times who promoted atheism and the extraterrestrial hypothesis, five stand out. Herbert George (H.G.) Wells (1866-1946) of England is considered by many to be the father of modern science fiction. Wells studied biology under Thomas Huxley, who was nicknamed "Darwin's Bulldog" due to his staunch defense of Darwinism, at the Normal School of Science in London, England. It was said that Wells greatly admired Huxley, and during this time Wells went from a Judeo-Christian moralist to an anti-establishment socialist. Darwinism is credited for having the greatest impact on his slide into atheism. Wells is considered to be the first person of influence to advocate the extraterrestrial hypothesis in modern times. As a note of interest, one of his good friends was English theologian G.K. Chesterton, one of the great Christian writers of his time, with whom Wells enjoyed debating on many occasions. Sir Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008) was born in England but lived most of his adult life in Sri Lanka, just off the coast of India. A staunch financial supporter of SETI (Search for ExtraTerrestrial Intelligence), it was his novel **THE SENTINEL** that formed the basis for the blockbuster movie **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY**. Isaac Asimov (1920-1992), a Russian-born American, was an unbelievably prolific writer with over 500 books to his credit on subjects as diverse as anatomy and physiology, astronomy, Biblical studies, biology, chemistry, geography, Greek mythology, history, humor, mathematics and physics. He signed the Humanist Manifesto II and was the 1984 Humanist of the Year. Despite his genius, Asimov admitted that his atheistic worldview stemmed from emotions, not solid scientific proof:

Emotionally I am an atheist. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time.

Gene Roddenberry (1921-1991) was the brainstorm behind **STAR TREK**. Although raised in a Christian home, he abandoned the Biblical worldview of his parents for secular beliefs. Last but certainly not least, Carl Sagan (1934-1996) of America was an agnostic - a person who is unsure of the existence of God - although he is famous for this very atheistic statement:

The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.

I suspect that many of his Jewish ancestors preferred **GENESIS 1:1** instead. Sagan played a

leading role in the NASA space program, briefing all Apollo astronauts before their lunar flights as well as leading experiments in preparation for the Mariner, Viking and Galileo planetary expeditions. Sagan provided the biggest boost in public popularity that SETI has ever enjoyed. In his science fiction book and movie **CONTACT** he explored the issues of atheism versus belief in God and the existence of life beyond earth. All five men are deceased, and now know the answer to the questions "Does God exist?" and "Is there life on other planets?"

The area of speculative science has also been making an impact regarding the rising interest in aliens and UFO's, although I would not credit it as being a major factor - at least not yet. Speculative science blends the scientific disciplines with ancient mysteries, mythology, religion and future science, with conspiracy theories thrown in to liven things up a bit. Many bookstores today feature speculative science sections, which may also be termed alternative science, alternative history or simply speculative. I have always been interested in speculative science, in large part because the authors who promote speculative science speak out against Darwinism and many of the other controversial areas that mainstream scientists would not have us question. Some of the most vocal opponents of Darwinism would label themselves as alternative. In addition to the search for Atlantis, exploration of psychic abilities and the repression of true history by mainstream academia, speculative science addresses the issue of extraterrestrial life, specifically how alien beings may have created modern humans and how the government may know more about this than we are told - a topic that is fascinating but based on pure speculation. An increasing number of people in society are disillusioned and doubtful of both Darwinism and Biblical creation and are all too ready to consider speculative beliefs. After all, if neither the teachings of mainstream science nor Judeo-Christian doctrine is appealing to a person, then one must find some set of beliefs which attempt to make sense of the world.

THE ANCIENT ASTRONAUT THEORY: A NEW RELIGION FOR A NEW AGE?

The Ancient Astronaut Theory is making an impact on society, and some say that it is even a new religion. The Ancient Astronaut Theory teaches that alien beings came to earth in the very distant past, when the only humanlike beings on earth were primitive apelike creatures, and the aliens genetically modified these apelike creatures until they became anatomically modern people. Therefore, according to those who believe in this theory, the aliens are our real creators, not the God of the Bible. The aliens are also responsible for giving people their religious beliefs. Many of the Ancient Astronaut theorists say that the Bible is simply a description of ancient encounters with these extraterrestrial beings. For instance, angels are merely kind and well-meaning aliens whereas demons or fallen angels are those aliens who wish to destroy us. When the good angels fight against the bad angels for the souls of people, the Ancient Astronaut theorists say that this is merely aliens from different planets who either wish to protect us or destroy us. The Ancient Astronaut Theory is concerned with finding a way to explain the many high-tech anomalies that archaeologists and antiquarians have discovered over the years. One of these high-tech anomalies is the megaliths, those large stone structures such as the Great Pyramid, Stonehenge and the statues of Easter Island. People throughout time have been baffled as to how these structures could have been built due to their immense size and, especially in the case of the Great Pyramid, the incredibly precise engineering that was required. Some researchers today, such as precision machinist and speculative author Christopher Dunn, say that we could not build another Great Pyramid because we do not possess the necessary engineering knowledge. How could the "primitives" of the past have built these structures? No need to fret about this mystery, for the Ancient Astronaut theorists have come to the rescue with an explanation: aliens built them! The whole theory tumbles like a house of cards, however, when it can be shown that ancient people were not primitive but rather highly intelligent and physically capable of incredible feats. In short, the Ancient Astronaut Theory rests in large part on the evolutionary belief that primitive creatures who were part human and part ape existed in the remote past. If the creation model, as found in the early chapters of **GENESIS**, is true then ancient people were anything but primitive and any apelike creatures which existed were simply

now-extinct varieties of apes. This is the point of contention between the Ancient Astronaut theorists and Biblical creationists.

Swiss-born Erich Von Daniken is generally considered to be the originator of the Ancient Astronaut Theory, although he was certainly not the first to come up with the ideas that form this belief. It was his original book **CHARIOTS OF THE GODS** that popularized the theory well beyond the limited success of his predecessors. **CHARIOTS OF THE GODS** was first published in the late sixties, and the movie based upon the book was released just a few years later. Several other books followed, and they did not lose popularity with time as some predicted would happen. Although Von Daniken has a great following still to this day, most consider Zecharia Sitchin to be the leading promoter of the theory today. Sitchin was born in Russia in 1920, but moved to what was then known as Palestine (modern Israel) while still very young. This was a time when many Jews such as Sitchin were returning to their ancestral homeland. He was a brilliant student who excelled in the history, languages and religions of the Near East. He is considered to be an expert in both Sumerian cuneiform and Egyptian hieroglyphics, as well as his native Hebrew. He graduated from the University of London and then returned to Palestine to write and edit for economic and historical journals. In 1948, just as modern Israel was becoming a nation, he emigrated to New York City where he continued his journalistic career. It was during this time that he began to write books on the Ancient Astronaut Theory.

Sitchin first became interested in the theory when he was a young boy in school studying the book of **GENESIS**. His teacher translated the word Nephilim, as found in the first four verses of chapter six, as giants, as does the King James version of the Bible. Sitchin protested, telling his teacher that the word Nephilim actually means "those who have come down from heaven to the earth". His teacher, instead of recognizing Sitchin's intellect and zeal, scolded the young boy and told Sitchin to never question the Bible. In all fairness, Sitchin was not so much questioning the Bible as he was questioning the teacher! This encounter peaked his curiosity, and he has pursued the matter of the identity of the Nephilim and the existence of alien worlds for practically all of his life. Most if not all of the Ancient Astronaut teachers claim that the sons of God from **GENESIS 6:1-4** were really extraterrestrial beings, and the Nephilim were their half-human offspring. Needless to say, this is not one of the standard Biblical interpretations! We will look more at **GENESIS 6:1-4** later in this paper.

Is the theory interesting? Yes, I believe it is very interesting but the appropriate question may be whether or not the theory has a leg to stand on. I do not believe it does. Let us take a look at the facts, and how they point us away from the extraterrestrial hypothesis, panspermia, exogenesis and the Ancient Astronaut Theory and guide us in the direction of the Bible and the creation model of origins.

IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE FOR ADVANCED LIFE BEYOND EARTH?

In short, no. Scientists tell us that there is very strong evidence for extra-solar planets, which are planets outside of our Milky Way galaxy. These extra-solar planets are not seen directly through a telescope, but instead are believed to exist because of the way they affect the orbits of visible bodies nearby. Planets beyond our Milky Way galaxy, however, are no indication that life exists "out there". Scientists have not seen clear evidence for life past or present on any of our neighboring planets for that matter. Planets in and of themselves are not an indicator of life. Professor Werner Gitt of Germany, in his article **GOD AND THE EXTRATERRESTRIALS** from Creation magazine 19:4 states:

In 1900, the French Academy of Science offered a prize of 100,000 francs for the first person to make contact with an alien civilisation - so long as the alien civilisation was not from Mars, because the Academy was convinced that Martian civilisation was an established fact!

This points out very well how preconceived notions affect matters that are unknown. The reality of the situation is that there has never been a single undeniable contact with an extraterrestrial being. Astrobiologist Guillermo Gonzalez makes it abundantly clear in his book **THE PRIVILEGED PLANET** that life on earth exists only because an incredible number of factors are just right, which is why he refers to earth as a "Goldilocks" planet. I would go so far as to say that life on earth is a miracle...literally! Even if advanced life does exist beyond earth, due to the incredible distances between galaxies it would take thousands of years for these alien beings to reach us. The closest star to earth is Proxima Centauri, an incredible 25 trillion miles away. The Apollo flights took three days to reach the moon. At the same speed it would take 870,000 years to reach this star. Even at a seemingly impossible one-tenth the speed of light, it would still take 43 years to reach this destination. Alien beings would likely be obliterated by a meteor or a comet, both of which are abundant throughout observable space. At the speeds that they would need to travel even a speck of dust such as silicate or ice particles colliding with their spaceship would be enough to destroy them. Advanced communication through space also seems highly unlikely. SETI, despite sweeping the sky with a network of radio telescopes that can scan 28 million radio frequencies per second, has not turned up even one "hit" since the project began in 1960 under the original name Project OZMA. Besides the efforts of SETI, there have been over 60 other similar projects in the past four decades, and not one of them has been productive. The researchers at SETI tell us that if we can discover a radio signal which contains undeniably coded information, then we will know that someone else is "out there". Yet scientists have an unbelievably complex information code right before them: DNA. DNA is proof that someone else is out there, but most choose to ignore the theological implications of DNA and attribute it instead to random, natural processes. SETI exists because people are searching for some higher intelligence that can tell us where we came from, how to fix our problems and how to find immortality. An unimaginably higher intelligence already did just that, however, yet many have ignored Him. In April 2000, 600 astronomers, biologists, chemists, geologists and scientists from various other disciplines met at the first Astrobiology Science Conference held at NASA's Ames Research Center in California. Concerning the possibility of finding life on another planet, the predominant mood was one of pessimism. British paleontologist Simon Conway Morris commented:

I don't think there is anything out there at all except ourselves.

I hate to disagree with such a well-respected scientist, but it is possible that advanced life may be out there somewhere in this vast universe. If so, I believe that you can be certain of two things. One, all life must be created by God. The probability of life evolving apart from the creative input of God is zero. Two, any life out there would be so far away that we will likely never know about it.

IS NATURALISTIC EVOLUTION EVEN POSSIBLE?

The whole premise behind the extraterrestrial hypothesis is that since life evolved here on earth, then certainly it must have evolved elsewhere in the universe as well. Most who hold to this theory believe that life is abundant throughout the universe, sort of like **STAR TREK** or **STAR WARS**. However, what if life can be shown to require intelligent input? If naturalistic evolution is an impossible idea, then everything changes. The number one challenge to Darwinism is the incredibly complex structure of all biological systems. Biological systems are way too complex to have originated apart from intelligent design. The deeper scientists dig into the microscopic structure of the cell, the more complex and interconnected the cellular parts prove to be. When Charles Darwin published **ON THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES** in 1859, cells were believed to be nothing more than globs of protoplasm. Today we know that the cell is an extremely complex structure that defies a naturalistic origin. The information contained in the DNA of just one cell, when transcribed onto 8.5" x 11" sheets of paper, will stack to a height of approximately one mile. A simple cell evolving into more complex life forms would require added genetic information,

which does not happen naturally - cells can only work with the genetic information that they have at their disposal, and they cannot acquire additional genetic material through known naturalistic processes. The mechanism proposed by evolutionists for adding genetic information is mutations to existing DNA, but mutations are at best neutral and almost always destructive. Each created kind of plant or animal had to have all of the necessary DNA present at the beginning of its existence: A plant or animal can lose genetic information over time but can never gain genetic information, which is what macroevolution - or one life form changing into a distinctly new life form - requires. Additionally, biological systems appear to be constructed in an "all or nothing" manner, meaning that the individual parts which make up the system must all work together and would have to from the beginning, and certainly could not have evolved slowly in stages. The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the church in Rome (1:20), tells us in no uncertain terms that we have no excuse for not recognizing this well-planned design:

For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-His eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

Some other serious challenges for Darwinism are as follows:

1. The Law of Biogenesis states that life comes only from life. Since life obviously exists, and life cannot come from non-living material, then the first life forms had to be created abruptly. Abiogenesis, or the idea that life can come from non-living matter, has been thoroughly refuted.
2. The Second Law of Thermodynamics is in direct opposition to naturalistic evolution. This law states that everything tends to regress from complex to simple, or from order to disorder, or from useful energy to useless energy, unless there is intentional work or creative input applied. Naturalistic evolution claims just the opposite. Many have proposed a self-ordering evolutionary force that is present throughout the cosmos, but this is a hypothesis which is clearly contradicted by what is observed in nature.
3. The Cambrian explosion demonstrates that life "sprang forth from out of nowhere", exactly as the book of **GENESIS** describes. The pre-Cambrian layer of rock, which is the bottom-most layer, contains only scant traces of life - primarily a few fossils of simple cells. Then in the next layer of rock, known as the Cambrian layer, complex life forms appear abruptly without any evolutionary predecessors. Even the most hardcore evolutionists have struggled to explain the Cambrian explosion.
4. A lack of transitional forms or "missing links" in the fossil record indicates that the various life forms were created individually. Not only are there no evolutionary predecessors in the beginning of the fossil record as described above, but also no clear-cut transitional forms appear after the initial appearance of the different body shapes. Concerning animals, the supposed transitional forms such as archaeopteryx and ambulocetus are highly debatable even among evolutionists. Concerning humans, the myth of the apeman is just that: A myth. The australopithecines have been shown to be an extinct variation of ape, whereas both Neandertal and Homo Erectus are within the range of modern human anatomical variation. All of the other so-called human missing links can be explained as being either ape or human, with no reason to believe that any were somewhere between the two classifications. Keep in mind that scientists tell us that of all the varieties of plants and animals that have ever existed on earth, most are extinct. It seems not only likely but quite logical that some of these extinct animals were primates, similar in some ways yet different from those in existence today. Also, there is nothing wrong in a Biblical sense with believing that the first men and women were physically different from us in some relatively minor ways. Small-scale or microevolutionary changes are scientifically predictable and do not refute the **GENESIS** account.
5. The advanced body structure and technology of ancient people points to an instantaneous creation of mankind. If Darwinian evolution were true, ancient people were closer to a common ancestor with the apes, which would have made ancient people less intelligent than people today. Just the opposite seems to be the case, however. Ancient people were capable of incredible engineering and technology feats. Scientists today are still unsure of how the ancients were able to construct the Great Pyramid near Cairo, Egypt as well as other megalithic structures such as Stonehenge outside of London, England. Carved from a single block of volcanic rock, the

Gateway of the Sun at Tiahuanaco in Bolivia weighs an estimated 100 tons. Theories abound, but no one knows how the ancients were able to transport and erect this stone. The ruins of a Roman temple at Baalbek in Lebanon rest on a single stone placed by an earlier unknown civilization. This base stone weighs an estimated 2,000 tons. How it was carved and placed defies explanation. According to Dr. Colin Fink of Columbia University, the ancient Egyptians knew how to electroplate copper and other metals. In other words, the Egyptians knew about electricity long before it was harnessed in modern times. Early in the last century a complex metal device was found off the coast of Greece. Consisting of several gears, this sophisticated device is believed by many researchers to have been used to compute planetary motions. Named the Antikythera device, it has been dated to shortly before the time of Christ. Known for their astronomical genius, the Mayans calculated the length of the solar year to be 365.2420 days, which is unbelievably close to the modern calculation of 365.2422 days. In the area of medicine, many ancient surgical techniques were quite advanced, such as trepanning which is the precise surgical excision of skull bone, and facial reconstructive surgery in ancient India was also unbelievably advanced. Those who hold to Darwinian beliefs find it very difficult at best to explain these ancient achievements, whereas Biblical creationists who uphold the veracity of **GENESIS** have no problem offering an explanation.

Other challenges to Darwinism could be posed, but this should be a sufficient start for one who wishes to further investigate the matter. The last decade especially has been quite challenging for naturalistic evolution, and further scientific discoveries should prove exciting.

WHAT ABOUT UFO'S?

The UFO enthusiast will likely be oblivious to my reasoning thus far. He or she will say "What about UFO's? Don't they prove that we are being visited by an extraterrestrial civilization?" It's a fair question, so let's examine the situation. Experts on the topic, both secular and Christian, are in agreement that 90-95% of all claimed UFO sightings can be explained naturalistically - without resorting to either aliens or the supernatural. To be conservative, let's go with 95%. That means that almost all claimed UFO sightings can be explained as being either natural weather and astronomical phenomenon, unknown or unrecognizable aircraft, hallucinations and other psychological "tricks of the mind" and even hoaxes. Although the 5% of sightings that cannot be easily explained would seem to be an almost insignificant number, the actual number is quite large in light of the fact that thousands of sightings are officially recorded each year by law enforcement, government and even non-government organizations such as MUFON (Mutual UFO Network). There are about 150 reported sightings worldwide each day. UFO's have been known to appear and then instantly disappear off radar, and untold numbers of eyewitnesses have claimed that they sometimes disappear from sight without a trace. Many have claimed that they can change shape and are capable of going from zero to thousands of miles per hour without a sonic boom, which is impossible according to the laws of physics. How could a flesh and blood being inside of these craft withstand such forces? They couldn't, in accordance with the laws of biophysics. Could it be possible that these craft are not physical, but rather non-physical? Instead of extraterrestrial, or from beyond earth, could they instead be interdimensional, or from a plane of existence beyond atoms and molecules? J. Allen Hynek, who was the government-appointed scientist who initiated the early UFO investigations in America, was initially an agnostic who at first believed the UFO phenomenon to be nothing more than a widespread hallucination. After years of study, however, he came to the conclusion that UFO's are (1.) real, (2.) that they are operated by non-physical beings of great intelligence and (3.) they are hostile and intent on the destruction of mankind. Think about what Hynek just described: Real but not physical (in other words, not flesh and blood beings) with great intelligence and bent on the destruction of mankind. Sound familiar? He described fallen angels as found in the Bible and numerous other religious texts. Many today are skeptical concerning the existence of angels, whether good or bad, but they can in small part account for the UFO phenomenon. The laws of science speak against UFO's being manned by flesh and blood beings, but science cannot address the possibility of UFO's being non-physical or

interdimensional in nature. In other words, this 5% can very easily be associated with the occult or paranormal. Do not, as many have, jump to the conclusion that all UFO sightings can be explained as being demonic. Only a very small percentage appear to have a paranormal explanation. Many Christians refer to **EPHESIANS 2:2**, which talks about the "prince of the power of the air", as being a reference to this possibility.

UFO cults, such as the Raelians, are some of the fastest growing religious movements in the world today. Many if not all of them are occultic in nature. They claim to be in contact with advanced alien beings from distant parts of the universe, who are interested in "helping along their less technologically advanced brethren". So far all they have delivered is death and despair, the worst example being the Heaven's Gate suicide cult.

SOME THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF ET

Many people, including many Christians, have difficulty believing that Earth is the only inhabited planet in this enormous universe. Others, however, are quite convinced that we are alone. As with other important spiritual issues, Christians are not universally united. Since the Bible is the guidebook on all matters for those of faith, it would be wise to examine the issue of theology as it applies to the possibility of other inhabited worlds. The following points are well covered in the article **DID GOD CREATE LIFE ON OTHER PLANETS?** by Gary Bates, as found in Creation magazine 29:2:

1. The Bible tells us that the whole creation groans and travails under the weight of sin (**ROMANS 8:20-22**). The entire universe is affected by the Adamic Curse, as brought on by the Fall (**GENESIS 3**), otherwise why would God destroy the whole creation in order to make way for a new heavens and a new earth (**II PETER 3:10-13** and **REVELATION 21:1-4**)? When Christ came to earth, He did so not only to redeem mankind but to redeem all of creation as well (**ROMANS 8:19-21** and **COLOSSIANS 1:15-20**). It would be unjust for any other inhabitants in the universe to be destroyed as a result of the Adamic Curse, which was no fault of their own. They did not inherit Adam's sin nature, of course. After all, God is just (**II THESSALONIANS 1:6-7**).
2. In order to receive the gift of salvation as found in Christ, one must be a physical descendant of Adam (**I CORINTHIANS 15:21-22**). Obviously, those on other planets would not be descended from Adam. Extraterrestrial beings would be lost for eternity when this present creation is destroyed by an intense heat (**II PETER 3:10-12**). Many have wondered if Christ's sacrifice for sin might be repeated elsewhere for other beings. However, we know that Christ died once for all (**ROMANS 6:10** and **I PETER 3:18**). Christ was not crucified and resurrected multiple times on other planets (**HEBREWS 9:24-28**). The redeemed church on earth is known as Christ's bride (**EPHESIANS 5:22-33** and **REVELATION 19:7-9**). Certainly Christ will not be a polygamist, with brides (churches) from other planets. Scripture makes it clear that Christ has made no provision for the redemption of any other species or even fallen angels (**HEBREWS 2:14-17**). God became a man in order to save mankind.
3. The attempt to fit aliens into the Bible is often based on the word "worlds" in **HEBREWS 11:3**:

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

Many believe that this means God has created many inhabited worlds throughout the cosmos. However, the word in Greek is aion (eon in English), which is correctly translated in some versions as universe since eon refers to the entire space-time continuum or, according to others, the word should be rendered "great ages". Even if the word does mean planets, it is pure extrapolation to presume that intelligent life appears on them. As previously mentioned, planets do not in and of themselves indicate life.

4. Another attempt to fit aliens into the Bible is **JOHN 10:16**:

I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My

voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.

Many believe that this verse teaches that God has created life on many planets, and that they are all His children. Jesuit priest Guy Consalmano, a Vatican astronomer who believes in extraterrestrial life and would like to believe in this interpretation of **JOHN 10:16**, states that the passage is actually referring to Gentiles as the "other sheep".

Christian astrophysicist and theologian David Wilkinson, in his article **SOME ALIEN PROBLEMS FOR GOD?** as found in Cosmic Pursuit magazine 2:1, is inclined to accept the possibility that God has created life on one or more planets besides our own. Like many other Bible scholars of today, he believes that scripture is silent on the matter, and that the above arguments may all be adequately answered. For instance, it is well within the capability of God to care for and protect innocent beings on other worlds when the universe comes to its end. The idea of beings on other worlds is troublesome for some, because they believe that would lessen humanity's special relationship with God. I believe that nothing could be further from the truth. I have two children, a son and a daughter, whom I both love immensely without favoritism toward either one. If I am capable of that, then certainly God is as well. Those who have studied and pondered the question of how alien life affects our spirituality remind us that the Bible was divinely inspired by God so that human beings can know God and how to be in a proper relationship with Him. The question of life on other worlds is not addressed possibly because it is not important. In the afterlife we will all know the answer to the question "Are we alone in the universe". Until then, we have our hands full taking care of ourselves and those in our lives.

WHAT IS THE REAL ISSUE?

I believe that the real issue is that many people have asked the question "How did life on earth originate?" after already having decided that God does not exist. The problem is that life is too complex to have evolved apart from intelligent design. So how do these people solve their dilemma? If there is no God, yet life shows all the signs of having been intelligently designed, then really only two ideas can explain this situation, neither of which is scientifically tenable: (1.) There must be a universal force which exists that is capable of organizing matter into more and more complex forms including life or (2.) some advanced beings from elsewhere in the universe are responsible for having created life on earth - or at the very least for having created human life. Each idea has serious problems. As previously stated, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which according to Albert Einstein is the best-attested law in all of science, states that the natural tendency of things is to degrade from a state of complexity to simplicity. In other words, nothing increases in complexity or organization over time but rather does just the opposite. The second major obstacle for the self-organizing idea is the Law of Biogenesis, which states that life comes only from life. The self-organizing idea is easily refuted by these basic laws of science. As previously mentioned, the existence of extraterrestrial beings or ancient astronauts has no scientific support but is rather based upon pure speculation. The facts of science, combined with logic, support the existence of an Almighty Creator who is responsible for having brought everything into existence. Human beings - the pinnacle of creation - were created with great mental and physical potential and were certainly capable of incredible feats in the distant past. The extraterrestrial hypothesis and the Ancient Astronaut Theory are simply ways to explain away God and the reliability of the book of **GENESIS**.

DOES GENESIS 6:1-4 DESCRIBE A VISIT FROM SPACE BEINGS?

As mentioned, many who subscribe to the Ancient Astronaut Theory claim that the sons of God, the daughters of men and the Nephilim, as found in **GENESIS 6:1-4**, describe an extraterrestrial visit here on earth. In fact, out of all the passages of scripture recorded for us in the Bible, the Ancient Astronaut Theorists rely the most on these verses. The identity of the sons of God, the daughters of men and the Nephilim has been a mystery that has intrigued Bible scholars for

centuries:

When men began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal, his days will be a hundred and twenty years. The Nephilim were on the earth in those days-and also afterward-when the sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

The idea that the sons of God, the daughters of men and the Nephilim describe an extraterrestrial race interacting with primitive humans is only one of several ideas regarding this passage of scripture. The following views have been proposed throughout the centuries:

1. The fallen angel view is one of the two most popular theories concerning these verses. Although it sounds impossible and is "stranger than fiction", this view was the most commonly held by ancient rabbinical scholars and the early Church Fathers, and even has many supporters today. Many scholars insist that the term sons of God always refers to angels in the Old Testament and is further supported in the New Testament, other Jewish literature such as the non-canonical but highly-venerated **I ENOCH** (200 B.C.) and the mythologies from many ancient cultures. According to this view the daughters of men are just that - human women - and the Nephilim were the offspring of the sexual union. The Nephilim, translated as fallen ones, are almost always described as being physical giants (**NUMBERS 13:31-33**).
2. The Sethite-Cainite view is the other of the two most popular theories. First proposed shortly before the time of Augustine, this view states that the sons of God were men from the line of Seth, the daughters of men were women from the line of Cain and the Nephilim were the product of the intermarriage between the two lines, which was supposedly forbidden or at the very least frowned upon. Why the children would be classified as Nephilim, or fallen ones, is not obvious since the Bible makes it clear that all people suffer from a fallen nature (**ROMANS 3:23**). Also, only eight people were saved on the ark at the time of the flood, so is it reasonable to believe that the majority of those descended from the line of Seth were any more God-honoring than those descended from the line of Cain? For all we know Noah's wife and the wives of his sons could have descended from Cain. The depravity of mankind is universal.
3. The royalty-commoner view is also widely held today. This view, first proposed by Jewish scholars during the Middle Ages, has support based upon ancient Near Eastern culture. According to this view, the sons of God were men of royalty. Kings often called themselves gods. This was especially true in Egypt, as the pharaoh was considered to be the divine son of the sun god Ra. The daughters of men were the daughters of non-royalty, or commoners, and the Nephilim were the children of the union. **PSALM 82:6-7** lends some support to this interpretation. The **GILGAMESH EPIC** of ancient Babylon mentions the right of kings - as "representatives" of the gods - to spend the wedding night with any woman being given in marriage. These "sons of God" certainly do not sound very Godly. Once again, why the children would be classified as Nephilim, or fallen ones, is not obvious.
4. As mentioned, the extraterrestrial view is rapidly gaining widespread acceptance. According to this view, the sons of God were male extraterrestrial beings, the daughters of men were human women and the Nephilim were their hybrid offspring. Sadly, many have opted for this view without even considering the other views.
5. The demonic possession view is similar to the fallen angel view, but different in that the sons of God are believed to be fallen angels who possessed the bodies of ungodly human men and committed their acts through bodily possession. Many hold this view because they believe that angels are spiritual beings only. Although it is true that angels are spirit beings, we see many instances in the Bible of Godly angels appearing fully physical, seemingly indistinguishable from human men (**GENESIS 19:1-29**). If Godly angels can appear fully physical, is it at least reasonable to believe that fallen angels can do so as well?
6. The Neandertal-modern homo sapien view finds support mostly among anthropologists who entertain Biblical ideas. According to this view, the sons of God were anatomically modern homo sapiens such as Cro-Magnon, the daughters of men were Neandertal women and the Nephilim were their hybrid offspring. Some fossilized skeletal remains do appear to be hybrid between

Cro-Magnon and Neandertal, but people have always been people regardless of physical differences. Neandertals are technically a classification of homo sapien, and all of the proposed ape-human missing links are based upon great speculation.

7. The large warrior view also finds support from anthropologists as well as those who hold to a naturalistic worldview in general. According to this view, the sons of God were simply large, fierce men who refused to be ruled by moral codes and took whatever they desired through brute force. The daughters of men were women whom they essentially raped, and the Nephilim were their offspring. However, these fierce warriors would not seem worthy of the title "sons of God". Once again, why the children would be classified as Nephilim, or fallen ones, is not obvious.

8. The mythology view is the view of those who hold a low view of scripture. Those who promote this view state that this passage of scripture is probably just a legend that Moses inserted into **GENESIS** for the sake of appealing to the surrounding pagans. To say that Moses inserted stories with no real spiritual significance is ridiculous and an insult to all who take scripture seriously.

There are many ancient writings which support the fallen angel view of **GENESIS 6:1-4**. B'Nai HaElohim, the Hebrew term which is translated sons of God, is consistently used in the Old Testament for angels (**JOB 1:6** and **JOB 2:1**). The children of Israel are called "the sons of the living God" once in **HOSEA 1:10**, but Israel is a long way in the future from the events in **GENESIS 6**. The Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament from the third century before Christ, uses the Greek equivalent word for angels. **I ENOCH** states that 200 angels called Watchers intruded upon the earth and took human women for their own lustful desires. According to the text, the Watchers descended upon Mount Hermon in northern Israel in the days of Jared (**GENESIS 5:15-18**). Although **I ENOCH** is not part of the inspired canon, it was highly venerated by both rabbinical and early Christian authorities. Chapter 6 verses 1-3 closely match **GENESIS**:

And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another "Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.

JUBILEES, also known as **LITTLE GENESIS**, clearly tells us in chapter 5 verse 1 that the sons of God were angels:

And it came to pass when the children of men began to multiply on the face of the earth and daughters were born unto them, that the angels of God saw them on a certain year of this jubilee, that they were beautiful to look upon; and they took themselves wives of all whom they chose, and they bare unto them sons and they were giants.

The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius also favored this view, put forth in **ANTIQUITIES I, 3.1**:

They made God their enemy; for many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength, for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants.

Many believe that **II PETER 2:4-5**, **I PETER 3:18-20** and **JUDE 6-7** confirm the fallen angel view. The early Church Fathers generally understood the term sons of God to denote angels. These included Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Pseudo-Clementine, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Commodianus and Lactantius as well as this quote from Justin Martyr:

The angels transgressed and were captivated by love of women and begat children.

Additionally, from the Reformation to the present famous names such as Martin Luther have held this view.

Nephilim is translated giants in the King James version of the Bible since the Septuagint used the term gigantes. Gigantes is correctly translated earth-born and not giants, however. These offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men were earth-born, but why describe them as earth-born? Although gigantes means earth-born and not giants in the physical sense, there were physical giants according to both the Bible and the many mythologies from the ancient world, and verified by occasional discoveries of very large skeletons.

Many Biblical scholars as well as those who study mythology and folklore believe that the Nephilim have been memorialized in the legends and myths of most every ancient culture on earth. The Greek Titans, partly terrestrial and partly celestial, are an example as is Hercules, the most famous of the Greek demigods. Some researchers attribute the building of the megaliths to the Nephilim. Does all this sound strange? Absolutely, but the topic deserves serious consideration in light of the fact that Moses, under the inspiration of God, recorded this passage of scripture for us.

A possible gene pool problem which supports the fallen angel view is found in **GENESIS 6:9**:

These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

The Hebrew word for generations always refers to genealogies, and the Hebrew word for perfect, tamiym, when translated means without blemish, sound, healthful, without spot or unimpaired. This verse tells us that Noah's genealogy was not tarnished. It seems to suggest that there was a human gene pool problem of some sort during this time. Some have suggested that this was Satan's attempt to thwart the prophecy found in the protoevangelion, which is the initial promise of the coming Messiah found in **GENESIS 3:15**. Noah may have been one of a relative few who were genetically without defect, and the only one of them who was righteous and just. Noah was not perfect, but a man of God much like Job was in the early post-flood days.

Concerning the daughters of men, Benoth Adam - the Hebrew term which is translated the daughters of Adam - refers to the natural female descendants of humankind. If Moses had meant to tell us that the daughters of men were females from the line of Cain only, could he have used language that made this more clear?

The created order is a problem for the fallen angel view, however. In the opening chapter of **GENESIS** God initiated a created order in which separate creations reproduce only "after their kind". This would seem to deny the possibility of angels and humans procreating. Of course, that's assuming that angels can procreate, which the obvious interpretation of scripture denies (**LUKE 20:34-36**). Also, angels are not offered redemption, whereas humans are offered that gift. Would an angelic-human hybrid be offered redemption or be denied redemption? An additional problem is that if the fallen angel view is correct, we would never know if someone we encountered was fully human or not. That's a disturbing thought, to say the least.

Hag Gibborim, meaning the mighty ones, heroes, chief-man or men of reknown, is a Hebrew term used to describe the Nephilim. Nimrod (**GENESIS 10:8**) is described by this term, but his lineage is recorded in detail. His father was definitely no angel, literally or symbolically. Interestingly, the Nephilim are always described as male. Giants are usually thought of as being extremely tall, but the giants of scripture could also have been giants in terms of their infamous deeds and accomplishments.

Some believe that Christ's comments regarding marriage in heaven disqualifies the fallen angel view. They say that **LUKE 20:34-36** renders the fallen angel view untenable, but what does Christ really say? Christ says that His angels in heaven have no need for marriage, as they do not reproduce since marriage is a human institution for the benefit of procreation. Christ says nothing of the intentions and capabilities of the fallen angels, however.

After the flood, the Nephilim once again were on the earth. A number of Canaanite tribes consisted of giants, among them the Rephaims, Emims, Horims and Zamsummims. Og, king of Bashan, was considered to be a giant. When the 12 spies scouted the land of Canaan they came back with the report that there were giants in the land (**NUMBERS 13:31-33**). When the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua later entered the land of Canaan, they were instructed to wipe out every man, woman and child of certain tribes (**JOSHUA 6:21** and **I SAMUEL 15:3**). This sounds harsh and has been a point of attack by Bible skeptics, but maybe another gene pool problem had emerged and God intended for His people to rectify the situation. Later we find more giants: Arba, Anak and his seven brothers - known collectively as the Anakim - and Goliath and his four brothers. See **DEUTERONOMY 2:10**, **DEUTERONOMY 3:11**, **I SAMUEL 17:4-7** and **II SAMUEL 21:15-22**. In conclusion, although it sounds strange and is even quite disturbing, a common interpretation is that fallen angels cohabited with women in the distant past and produced a race of partly terrestrial, partly celestial beings who were wicked and a curse to humanity. This is, I freely admit, even more strange than the alien view put forward by the Ancient Astronaut theorists. However, one of the other views could be the correct interpretation. It is safe to say that the mystery of the sons of God, the daughters of men and the Nephilim will remain just that: A mystery.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

All of the following books and magazines have been used to research this paper. The following twelve books are written by Christian authors and address the topic of life on other planets from both a Biblical and scientific perspective:

1. **UFO CULTS AND THE NEW MILLENIUM**. William Alnor. 1998.
2. **UFO'S IN THE NEW AGE**. William Alnor. 1992.
3. **ALIEN INTRUSION**. Gary Bates. 2004.
4. **ALIEN INTERVENTION**. Paul Christopher. 1998.
5. **LIGHTS IN THE SKY & LITTLE GREEN MEN**. Mark Clark, Hugh Ross & Kenneth Samples. 2002.
6. **ALIEN ENCOUNTERS**. Mark Eastman & Chuck Missler. 1997.
7. **UFO'S: FRIEND, FOE OR FANTASY?** William Goetz. 1997.
8. **EXTRATERRESTRIALS: WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON?** Mark Hitchcock & Scot Overbey. 1997.
9. **UFO'S AND THE ALIEN AGENDA**. Bob Larson. 1997.
10. **UFO: END-TIME DELUSION**. David Allen Lewis & Robert Shreckhise. 1991.
11. **ALIEN OBSESSION**. Ron Rhodes. 1998.
12. **ALONE IN THE UNIVERSE?** David Wilkinson. 1997.

The following three books are written by creationists who have examined the evidence for the advanced science and technology of ancient man, demonstrating that it is not necessary to look to aliens from other planets in order to explain mysteries from the ancient world:

1. **THE PUZZLE OF ANCIENT MAN: EVIDENCE FOR ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN PAST CIVILIZATIONS**. Donald Chittick. 2006.
2. **DEAD MEN'S SECRETS**. Jonathan Gray. 2004.
3. **SECRETS OF THE LOST RACES**. Rene Noorbergen. 2001.

The following magazines have also been an invaluable resource:

1. Creation magazine, issues 17:1, 17:2, 18:3, 19:4, 20:2, 22:4, 23:1, 25:3, 25:4, 26:1, 26:3, 27:2, 27:3, 28:2, 28:4, 29:2 and 29:4.
2. Cosmic Pursuit magazine, issue 2:1.