

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

Number 305 Copyright 2012 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 April 2012
Email: tjtrinityfound@aol.com Website: www.trinityfoundation.org Telephone: 423.743.0199 Fax: 423.743.2005

Are UFOs Biblical?

by W. Gary Crampton, Th. D.

Is there such a thing as intellectual extraterrestrial life? That is, is there intelligent life (*i.e.*, beings with physical makeup, as opposed to merely spiritual beings such as angels) in outer space? If so, are there such things as Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs), which are guided by intelligent extraterrestrial beings (hereafter ETs)? Many people have supposedly experienced sightings of flying saucers. A recent study showed that UFO sightings have increased 67% in the last three years.¹ Yet, the Air Force Project Blue Book has strongly suggested that there is no substantial evidence to support this phenomenon. Moreover, there has never been a radar detection of a UFO.² Other projects, such as SETI (the "Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence"), have found the same to be the case.³ There is no credible scientific evidence available which would support such a notion. The "Roswell incident" of 1947, where a flying saucer allegedly crashed in New Mexico and the U. S. Air Force retrieved the bodies of aliens fostered the belief in ETs. This later proved to be a hoax, however. Even the numerous "abduction" experiences (sometimes referred to as "close encounters of the fourth kind")

have been shown (predominately) to be little more than "physic [or spiritual] experiences."⁴

Commendably, this is admitted by evolutionary theorists themselves. Freeman Dyson acknowledges that "there is as yet no evidence either for [ETs] or against it." Ervin Laszlo wrote: "Alas, these efforts [to find ETs] have not brought positive results." And Isaac Asimov stated: "We have absolutely no evidence that any such phenomenon as life on other worlds exists."⁵

Some Non-Christian Views

Dr. Carl Sagan, the late renowned David Duncan Professor of Astronomy and Space Sciences and Director for Planetary Studies at Cornell University, was dogmatically convinced that ETs do exist. His dogmatism is noticeable in the first line of his book *Cosmos*, where we read that "the cosmos is all that is or ever was or will ever be." After a few more pages he states that the "laws of nature are the same throughout the cosmos...[and that] evolution is a fact, not a theory."⁶ These statements are not argued; no evidence is presented; it is so simply because Dr. Sagan declared it to be so. Here is the ultimate *ipsi dixit*.

Hence, we should not be surprised when in the same book Dr. Sagan assures us that "there must

¹ Huffpost Weird News Aol.com, August 26, 2011.

² Gary Bates, *Alien Intrusion: UFOs and the Evolution Connection* (Powder Springs: Creation Book Publishers, 2004), 18, 155. See also ufocasebook.com/bluebook.html. The Air Force project ceased in 1970. Dr. Bates is an evolutionist turned evangelical, whose book is considered by some to be "the book" on the subject of UFOs and intellectual extraterrestrial beings. It is a very fine source and has been used extensively by the present author in the writing of this essay.

³ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 72-75, 126-128. See also history.nasa.gov/seti.html.

⁴ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 178-189, 225-266.

⁵ Cited in Bert Thompson, "Is there Intelligent Life in Outer Space?" *Reason and Revelation* (October 1991), 38-39. Dr. Thompson's article has also been very helpful in writing this essay.

⁶ Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 1, 4, 27.

be many such worlds [such as ours] scattered throughout space.”⁷ Then in his *Cosmic Connection*, he writes:

The initial chemical constituents for the origin of life are the most abundant molecules in the universe. Something like the processes that on earth led to man must have happened billions of other times in the history of our galaxy. There must be other star-folk.... There must be, I think, many places in the galaxy where there are beings far more advanced than we in science and technology, in politics, ethics, poetry, and music.”⁸

According to Dr. Sagan, if life evolved on this planet, there is no reason to believe that it has not evolved on other planets as well. The Cornell University professor was so convincing that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and SETI, have spent millions of tax dollars to investigate intelligent life on other planets. In the last quarter of the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries, numerous messages from “planet earth” have been sent into outer space with the hope of communicating with ETs.⁹

Other reputed scientists, such as Francis Crick and Fred Hoyle, posit the necessity of ETs due to the complexity of life on earth. They maintain that “earth life” is so diverse, so complicated, that it could hardly “just have evolved” by naturalistic processes. So, life must have evolved on some other planet and “been planted” on earth.¹⁰ (It should be obvious that Crick and Hoyle have not solved the problem of the complexity of life, they have merely pushed it back to another planet in another time).

Some “Christian” Views

There are some UFOlogists who profess to use the Bible in support of their convictions that ET life may or does exist. Roman Catholic teacher R. L. Dione alleges that UFOs are to be seen as God’s messengers, His angels, who are involved in bringing prophetic messages to the people of God. They are also used by God to perform miracles. Even Jesus Christ was benefitted by this form of messenger. We are to understand, then, that ETs are “closely associated with the Christian religion.” Others

maintain that the ancient writers of Holy Scripture could not have the knowledge they possessed about the universe without a supernatural creature such as an ET.¹¹ Such thinking is such an obvious affront to the monotheistic, Trinitarian God of Holy Scripture, who as the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 4)¹² defines, is “Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth,” that it needs no further refutation. One who denies these divine perfections in statements such as those made by these “scholars,” either explicitly or implicitly, has denied the God who possesses the perfections.

Some men, such as Michael Heiser believe in an old universe (perhaps billions of years old), and claim that over such a large number of years ETs could easily have developed.¹³ This is mere supposition founded on faulty exegesis. First, as properly stated in the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 9), the Bible clearly teaches that we live in a young universe (thousands of years old): “The work of creation is, God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six [24 hour] days, and all very good.” And second, it is one thing to suggest that ETs could have developed, it is another thing to say that the Bible teaches it. We are not talking about what may have occurred, we are talking about what the Bible says. And it says nothing about such ETs.

There are others, such as Erich von Daniken, who aver that the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of a spaceship in *Ezekiel* 1.¹⁴ This is pure nonsense. The prophet’s vision was extraordinary, to be sure, but it was a Christophany (a vision of the pre-incarnate Son of God).¹⁵ Von Daniken also suggests that the “sons of God” spoken of in *Genesis* 6 were aliens visiting planet earth who cohabited with human beings.¹⁶ Again, this is mere supposition, without any exegetical basis. As Matthew Henry points out, “the sons of God” in this passage are in all likelihood the “professors of religion, who were called by the name of the Lord, and called upon

¹¹ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 93-94, 104-106.

¹² All references to the Westminster Standards, to include the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, along with the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms*, is from *Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1990). The English has been modernized.

¹³ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 375-378.

¹⁴ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 378-380.

¹⁵ Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, n. d.), IV:747.

¹⁶ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 380-381.

⁷ Sagan, *Cosmos*, 12.

⁸ Cited in John Robbins, “The Sagan of Science,” *The Trinity Review* (September/October, 1988), 4.

⁹ Robbins, “The Sagan of Science,” 4-5. Thompson, “Is There Intelligent Life in Outer Space?” 37-38.

¹⁰ Thompson, “Is There Intelligent Life in Outer Space?” 37-38.

that name,” sinfully marrying “the daughters of men, that is, those that were profane and strangers to God and godliness.”¹⁷ To find “alien intruders” in this passage is an “alien intrusion” into the Word of God.

Gary Bates is far more conservative and orthodox in his analysis of the ET movement than most “Christian” writers on this subject. He maintains that much of what is going on in this phenomenon is due to the work of Satan and his minions. The “gospel according to ET” is seen as the attempt of fallen angels to deceive the people of God and to have them put their trust in ETs rather than Jesus Christ.¹⁸ The present writer believes that there is much to say about the Satanic influence involved in the UFO issue. According to the Bible Satan “transforms himself into an angel of light,” and is able to use his fellow fallen angels to transform themselves into angels of light with him (2 *Corinthians* 11:13-14). The Apostle Paul tells us that the battle the Christian is involved in is not “against flesh and blood, but against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (*Ephesians* 6:12). The Bible is very clear that Satan, “the god of this age,” has blinded the minds “of those who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them” (2 *Corinthians* 4:4). There is much truth in this theory. And Dr. Bates is to be applauded for his focus on the Bible as the Word of God, the Lordship of Christ over every area of life, and one’s need to put his trust in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. But an excessive focus on the “gospel according to ET” can also be harmful. In the opinion of this writer the real problem is the lack of knowledge that exists in the church of Jesus Christ. In the words of Hosea: “My [God’s] people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (4:6). We are living in a benighted age, where the Bible is not well-known among the people of God.

What the Bible Says

The issue here, as with all matters, is one of epistemology. How do we know what we know? In the words of Gordon Clark:

While the question of how we can know God is the fundamental question in the philosophy of religion, there lies behind it in general philosophy the ultimate question, How can we know anything at all? If we

cannot talk intelligently about God, can we talk intelligently about morality, about our own ideas, about art, politics – can we even talk about science? How can we know anything? The answer to this question, technically called the theory of epistemology, controls all subject matter claiming to be intelligible or cognitive.¹⁹

The Christian has an answer to these questions which is found in the Word of God, the axiomatic starting point for all of our “knowledge” of the truth. This is taught in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1:6) as follows:

The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man’s salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture: unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men.

In other words, the Bible, either explicitly or implicitly, speaks infallibly to every area of life; it never leaves us without an answer to our questions or solutions to our problems (2 *Timothy* 3:16-17).

The Bible nowhere explicitly affirms or negates ETs. Implicitly, however, Scripture does deny the existence of such beings, thus negating the possibility of flying saucers guided by these so-called non-earthly creatures.

Scripture views Earth as the center of the universe. It is on Earth that the drama of sin and redemption takes place (*Genesis* 1-3). It is the Earth that God “has given to the children of men” (*Psalms* 115:16). It was on Earth that God created man in His image (*Genesis* 1:26-27). Adam was created as the federal and natural head of the entire human race. From one man and his wife, on this Earth, God brought forth “every nation of mankind” (*Acts* 17:24-26). And although the Bible does speak of the Sun, Moon, and stars (*Psalms* 19:4; 136:8-9), and states that they have definite purposes, *i.e.*, “for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years...to give light on the earth...[and] to rule the day...[and] the night” (*Genesis* 1:14-16), and says that “there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory” (1 *Corinthians* 15:41),

¹⁷ Henry, *Commentary*, I:51.

¹⁸ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 267-312.

¹⁹ Gordon H. Clark, “How Does Man Know God?,” *The Trinity Review* (July/August 1989), 1.

only the Earth is referred to as the place where man “dwells.”

Further, the Earth is the place where God the Son took upon Himself a human nature (*John* 1:1-3, 14; *Luke* 1-2), and gave His life to redeem a fallen world (*John* 1:29; 3:16; *Hebrews* 2:9). It was also on Earth that Jesus Christ was resurrected from the dead (*John* 20:1-18; *1 Corinthians* 15), and from Earth that He ascended to the right hand of His heavenly Father (*Acts* 1:9-10). Then too, Christ, who is referred to in the Bible as the second and last Adam (*1 Corinthians* 15:45-47), is stated to be the Kinsman-Redeemer (*Goel*) of those whom He came to redeem (*Isaiah* 59:20). According to the Bible, a kinsman-redeemer is one who is “related by blood to those he redeems.” This clearly rules out any ETs.²⁰

In all of these Biblical references, it is the Earth where intelligent life resides. There is not even a hint that any form of ET life exists. Nor is there any prophecy regarding the invasion or coming of such beings. This alone should suffice to warn us about speculation regarding ETs. Has not God said that the Bible equips us for every exigency of life (*2 Timothy* 3:16-17), never leaving us without an answer? What about UFOs? Has God failed to inform us of this phenomenon? To quote the Apostle Paul: “May it never be!” (*Romans* 6:2, *passim*).

In addition, as previously noted, the Bible teaches that Adam was created as the federal head of the human race. Implicit in this concept is the fact that in Adam, God who alone is good (*Mark* 10:18), gave mankind the best possible representative for humankind.²¹ Yet Adam fell into sin, and in his fall sin was imputed to the entire human race (*Romans* 5:12-19).

Several millennia later God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to reconcile the world to Himself (*Colossians* 1:20), and to redeem His elect people (*Ephesians* 1:7). One sacrifice, and one only, was sufficient and efficient for all time (*Hebrews* 7:27; *1 Peter* 3:18). According to Scripture, the Lord Jesus, who is the only way to the Father (*John* 14:6; *Acts* 4:12), must never die again (*Hebrews* 9:28). It is worthy of note that when Peter says in *Acts* 4:12 that “there is no other name under heaven...by which we must be saved [emphasis added],” this strongly indicates that there is no way that any intelligent life, on any planet (“under heaven”), if

such existed, can be saved apart from Jesus Christ’s sacrificial cross work. According to the inspired apostle, the idea of a Savior who goes about from planet to planet to carry out His redemptive work is inconceivable.

Here we have an answer to the question concerning ET life on other planets: If there were such, who would redeem them? Certainly not Christ, who died once for all of Earth’s elect, a never to be repeated event (*1 Peter* 3:18). And if these alleged creatures had not fallen in sin, and thereby would not be in need of a savior, then we must conclude that God did not give earthly mankind the best representative in Adam. There would be someone on another planet who did not succumb to temptation, who was ethically superior to the first Adam, and at least, to some measure, the equal of the second and last Adam, Jesus Christ (*1 Corinthians* 15:45-47). This is an untenable theory.

Moreover, in *Romans* 8:19-23 we read that the entire creation (not just planet Earth) has been affected by the Fall of man. The only alternative, then, is that there is still intelligent life on other planets that has fallen in sin and is left without any hope of a savior. This too is implausible. It is out of accord with *Revelation* 5:9, where we read that Jesus Christ died to redeem those “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Simple logic would seem to demand that if Adam’s sin affected the whole universe (which it did), and if Christ died only once to redeem fallen persons “out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation” (which He did), then another fallen or un-fallen world with intelligent life is not possible.

What about the numerous alleged “experiences” of people from various parts of the world? Simply stated, empirical experiences (which can never give us truth), of Christians or non-Christians, are not our epistemic base. “He who trusts in his own heart [experiences] is a fool” (*Proverbs* 28:26). Experiences which are out of line with the teachings of the Bible must always be renounced as fallacious. The Bible has a monopoly on truth; only God’s Word should be trusted. And the Scripture is clear: there is no ET life; hence, neither are there UFOs piloted by such life forms.

²⁰ Bates, *Alien Intrusion*, 375.

²¹ Gordon H. Clark, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man* (Jefferson, Maryland: The Trinity Foundation, 1984), 49.