

# UFOS, THE BIBLE AND TARGETED INTERVENTION by Dr. Barry Downing

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"UFOS, the Bible, and Targeted Intervention."

Has Dr.Barry Downing finally silenced his Critics?

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Dr.

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## INTRODUCTION

In October 2009 I published an article on the Strong Delusion web site entitled "Hermeneutical Rape." I wrote the article as an answer to some of my critics such as Michael Heiser, Gary Bates and Guy Malone. The title of the article was taken from a criticism of my work made by Heiser, who suggested my UFO theology involves hermeneutical rape of the biblical text. My basic question, asked more than 40 years ago in my book, *The Bible and Flying Saucers*, is this: is it possible that what we now call UFOs carry the angels of God? In this context, the biblical question would be: was the pillar of cloud and fire, the UFO of the Exodus, a form of space transportation for the angels?

Heiser began blogging a response to my article in October, and finally finished sometime in December of 2009. I have waited until he finished to make a response to his blogs, five in number that contained critical content. When I quote Heiser in this response, I will refer to Blog 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 as a way to make reference.

I have framed my response under three major headings: I. Exodus and Biblical Angelology. Heiser has been critical of my treatment of the Exodus material, and I will try to clarify my interpretation of that material in light of the larger biblical concept of angelology. II. Faith, Science and Epistemology. Heiser and I are closer in our method of biblical interpretation than might at first glance be obvious, but there are areas of difference that need to be explored. These issues relate to the tension between faith and what Heiser calls "hard science," the general area of epistemology. He sees my arguments as "nonsense," or lacking "coherence." (Blog 1) The issue here is: is the nonsense my fault, or Heiser's? Many Newtonian scientists thought Einstein's theory of relativity was "nonsense" when they first heard of it. Nonsense maybe, but it turned out to be true. III. Targeted Intervention as a Ruling Strategy. Heiser is right in wondering if there is any larger pattern, any coherence, that would make sense of the biblical stories in our faith tradition, and modern political and religious powers as they relate to the UFO issue. I will present the concept of

&ldquo;targeted intervention&rdquo; as a paradigm for interpreting the current UFO situation in light of the Bible.

## I. EXODUS AND BIBLICAL ANGELOLOGY

In my article I had suggested that the pillar of cloud, the Exodus UFO, met Moses at the burning bush, and orchestrated the plagues in Egypt, including Passover.

Michael Heiser says, &ldquo;Uh, check the text, Barry&mdash;there is no reference to a pillar of cloud at the burning bush (Exodus 3 for all you who want to read it.) THIS is precisely why your hermeneutic and eisegesis cannot be trusted. You simply insert details into the text that favor what you&rsquo;re saying, assuming people won&rsquo;t look (And you&rsquo;ve been right there to a large extent). Ridiculous.&rdquo; &ldquo;Guess what? No pillar of cloud ever mentioned with the plagues or Passover either! Who&rsquo;da thunk that?!&rdquo; (Blog 5)

I realize the pillar of cloud and fire is not mentioned at the burning bush, nor in connection with the plagues. But this is why we do hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is not just reading a chapter in the Bible, it is looking at the chapter in light of the Bible as a whole. I did not go through detailed analysis in my article, &ldquo;Hermeneutical Rape,&rdquo; because I hoped that those who criticized my work would read the details of this analysis in my book, Chapter 3. But for those who have not read my book, I will do a review here.

The pillar of cloud and of fire is central to the Exodus, it is understood to be the power of God that takes over before the parting of the Red Sea, and continues on, dropping the manna to feed Israel daily, landing on Mt. Sinai to deliver the commandments to Moses, and leading the way to the Promised Land. Here is a most basic question: what was the pillar of cloud and fire? To the biblical writers, it was a sign of the presence of God. In fact, sometimes, it was referred to as &ldquo;My presence.&rdquo; (Ex 33:14; all biblical references will be to the Revised Standard Version, RSV, unless otherwise

noted.) It was also called "the Lord" and "the angel of God"; and is sometimes referred to as "the Lord in the pillar of cloud and of fire" (Ex. 14:19-30). Did some of the Jewish leaders at that time believe either that the pillar of cloud and fire was God, or that God was contained in it? It seems clear they did. In the burning bush sequence, the text says "Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God" (Ex. 3:6). [Israel was conditioned to the idolatry of Egypt, and soon created a molten calf at Sinai, a god they could see. (Ex. 32:1-6)] When Israel gets to Mt. Sinai, we find the text saying, "And Moses went up to God" (Ex. 19:3). The book of Deuteronomy finishes its praise of Moses by saying "And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). Are we to believe that God is some kind of physical reality that only special humans like Moses can see? Was the pillar of cloud and fire in some sense God? Was the burning bush God?

Heiser

says, "Christianity and Judaism never claim that God is part of the created world. His existence is therefore not in the realm of scientific inquiry." (Blog 1) I agree with this statement by Heiser, but I do not think the invisibility and non-physicality of God is a clear doctrine in the book of Exodus; a distinction between God and God's angels would develop later. The concept of the invisibility of God is a doctrine that evolved over a period of time. (The word angel appears only 6 times in the book of Exodus, but over 50 times in the book of Revelation.) The pillar of cloud and fire is portrayed as something everyone saw, something apparently as physical and scientific as our created world. But the pillar of cloud had divine authority.

It is clear that Heiser believes that by claiming the pillar of cloud is a UFO, that I follow R.L. Dione who wrote the book *God Drives a Flying Saucer*. I do not believe God drives a flying saucer, but I believe his angels may. Heiser says that "your reading of this passage [the pillar of cloud at the Red Sea] has the God of Israel in a space craft, meaning that he needs technology to travel. What happened to omnipresence? Omnipotence? The idea that Jesus expressed with complete clarity, that God "is a spirit" (John 4:24). You've just made God subject to the laws of nature, which means he's a created being, which means he isn't God by ANY biblical definition. In short, you don't have much of a theology." (Blog 5) Like most Protestant Christians, Heiser does not have a functioning angelology. He may say he believes in angels, but he does not give them anything to do. Instead, many Protestants hold an almost unconscious view of God as a kind of supernatural magic bullet who can do anything any place. But then who needs angels? But God does use angels, perhaps because it pleases him, and uses humans for the same reason. Heiser claims that God is not physical, and I agree, but Heiser fails to notice that often the angels are very physical, they even eat with Abraham, as the resurrected Jesus ate with his disciples.

How

do we claim the Exodus UFO had divine authority, but was not God? By claiming that the pillar of cloud either was, or carried, the angels of God, but was not God in God's essence, but rather God in mediated form. Of course the text itself does refer to the Exodus

UFO as an angel, but there is not a fully developed angelology in Exodus. The development of biblical angelology was a gradual process. The angelology of Zechariah, the next to last book in my Old Testament, has some of the flavor of the angelology of the book of Revelation. Angelology expanded during the intertestamental period, sometimes in ways the church could not affirm. In the Apocryphal book of Tobit, the angel Raphael seems to be a blend of a traveling companion and a match maker straight out of "Fiddler on the Roof." (Enoch is seen as a Merkabah text, influenced by the "throne-chariot" tradition of Ezekiel.) By the time we get to the New Testament, this is understood: "No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known." (Jn. 1:18) Jesus is the ultimate mediator, the Word made flesh, "the image of the invisible God." (Col 1:15) But if it is true that no one has ever seen God, then what of all those passages in Exodus where God seems to be visible, and in charge? By the New Testament era, it was understood that all of the Exodus was brought about by the angels of God. This is clearly illustrated in Stephen's speech in Acts chapter 7. Stephen gives what is certainly understood by the high priest and all who heard it to be "orthodox Jewish belief" at that time, or at least orthodox Pharisee theology. Stephen says that an angel of God contacted Moses at the burning bush (7:30), and goes on to say "This Moses whom they refused, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and judge?' God sent as both ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel that appeared to him in the bush. He led them out, having performed wonders and signs in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness for forty years. This is the Moses who said to the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as he raised me up.' This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai, and with our fathers; and he received living oracles to give to us." (7:35-38) At the end, Stephen condemns his listeners for killing the "Righteous One," "you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." (7:53)

We

should note that there were no complaints about Stephen's review of Jewish history. The rage came when he proclaimed that they had killed Jesus, the "Righteous One." I take this to mean that at least one segment of Judaism at this time had a strong angelology, and it was by this means that the "otherness" of God was maintained, while at the same time saying that the Jews were indeed chosen people, singled out for a special revelation through the angels of God. And since the book of Acts is included in the New Testament canon, I take it as Christian orthodox truth that the whole of the Exodus was carried out by "by the hand of the angel," meaning the power of God was exercised through angelic beings, just as the power of God is exercised through humans when we preach the gospel (Mt. 28:19-20). If we read the book of Exodus in isolation from the New Testament, as Heiser does, then it appears that the essence of God was present at or in the burning bush, at or in the pillar of cloud and fire. But by New Testament times, angelology separated visible angelic signs of God from the essence of God's uncreated invisibility. As New Testament scholar G.H.C. Macgregor says, "The angel as a mediator is a later tradition added to the original account, in which Yahweh himself gives the laws to Moses." (Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 9, p. 100)

writers knew from Genesis that the angels of God appeared to Abraham and Lot in human form. This led to the warning "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." (Heb. 13:2) Do angels have wings? Not the ones that are going to knock on our doors and catch us "unaware." The angel that rolled back the stone in front of the tomb of Jesus and sat on it "descended from heaven." (Mt. 28:2) Angels come from the sky, and generally do not have wings. But Christian artists added wings to angels to explain how they got from earth to heaven. Whatever the pillar of cloud and fire is, or was, it relates to the angelic order, and in some sense, the pillar of cloud relates to all of the Exodus—burning bush, plagues, Passover, parting of the Red Sea, manna, Sinai Revelation, and finally Promised Land. Stephen says that the same power that met Moses at the bush, this same angel, performed wonders and signs in Egypt, as well as at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness journey.

The

Apostle Paul briefly noted this view of the work of the angels at Mt. Sinai when he says, "Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained by angels through an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one." (Gal. 3:19,20) Authors of scripture understood that there was a danger that we might worship angels, and John Calvin was concerned not to give power to the angels that only rightly belonged to God and Christ, but Calvin affirmed "For we must so understand, however much it may be twisted, what Stephen and Paul say, that the law was given by the hand of the angels." (Institutes of the Christian Religion, translated by Ford Lewis Battles, Book I, XIV, 9.)

How

did the biblical doctrine of angels develop? Even in the Hebrew testament there was anxiety about saying that Moses saw God. There is a very interesting passage in Exodus where Moses asks to see the face of God, and God denies the request, hiding Moses in a rock, while allowing Moses to see God's back side. (Ex 33:17-23) New Testament angelology represents a thousand years of interpretation since the time of Moses. During the time of Jesus, the Pharisees believed in angels, the Sadducees did not. (Acts 23:6-8) Paul was a Pharisee, and thus believed in angels, and was in fact a witness to the speech of Stephen before Saul/Paul was converted (Acts 7:58; 8:1) Also Paul reported that he was carried off to the "third heaven," (2 Cor. 12:1-4), thus giving Paul a special view of the angelic world. In his teaching Jesus had connected the world of the angels and the world of the resurrection. Consequently, when Jesus preached about the kingdom of heaven, this angelic world was understood to have been directly involved in the events of "special revelation" that are part of the Jewish and Christian tradition.

The

angels brought about all of the Exodus under God's command. Thus we have the right to suppose that the pillar of cloud and fire is in some sense connected to all of the Exodus as part of the angelic reality. Consequently we have a right to raise this question: Does the pillar of cloud and fire provide extraterrestrial transportation for the angels? The Second Coming of Christ is expected to be brought about by the angels coming on the clouds of heaven, as if the

&ldquo;clouds&rdquo; are part of their transportation system. (Mt. 24:30)  
And if the &ldquo;clouds&rdquo; are some kind of transportation system for the angels, is this system technological? How would we know if the angels use a technological system of transportation? The biblical people had no understanding of technology as we know it. [Heiser would I think agree. He says &ldquo;The Bible never claims to be a science book.&rdquo; (Blog 3)] And that leaves us with our current mystery: if modern UFOs are an advanced technology, how do we know they are not the angels of God? Putting it in a more positive form: on the basis of my study of modern UFOs, they seem to have more than enough power to do all the things reported in the Exodus. Heiser would say this is not yet &ldquo;proven by hard science.&rdquo; (Blog 4) We will return to the issue of &ldquo;hard science&rdquo; in Part II of my article.

### Interpreting the Burning Bush in Light of the Pillar of Cloud and Fire

Having  
established that the orthodox New Testament view of the Exodus is that it was the work of the angels of God, from beginning to end, let us look at the burning bush text in Exodus chapter 3.

Moses  
is caring for his sheep in the wilderness when we read the following.  
&ldquo;And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, &lsquo;I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.&rsquo; When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, &lsquo;Moses, Moses!&rdquo; (Ex. 3:2-4)

If  
we approach the Exodus story as a unified angelic event, then we have a right to wonder about the connection between the pillar of cloud, called the angel of God, at the Red Sea, and the angel of God at the burning bush. Might this not be the same angel? Notice that at the Red Sea, the angel of God is in voice communication with Moses (Ex. 14:26 etc). This voice in some sense comes &ldquo;from above.&rdquo;

But  
at the burning bush, the voice comes from ground level. Are we to suppose that the pillar of cloud, which seems able to fly anywhere, could not land on the ground? And what if it were to land in a thicket, or a clump of bushes? (This is one possible translation of

the Hebrew word for bush. And this would seem to explain the need to use the words “out of the midst of.” Some bright light or fire might have been glowing in the middle of a thicket.) The pillar of cloud was also a glowing object. If it were to land in a thicket, would it light up the leaves and branches of the bushes? When modern UFOs land in a woods, they often light up the trees around them, sometimes leaving an “after glow.” Exodus chapter three does not say the pillar of cloud and fire was present, this is true. But hermeneutics is the process of looking at the larger biblical context. I do not believe we can say with full assurance, “the pillar of cloud and fire was not on the ground, in a thicket, causing the thicket to appear to be on fire to Moses, but not really on fire, which is why the bush did not burn up.” If the pillar of cloud and fire were to land in a clump of bushes, its basic shape would be disguised by the bushes, but its glow would cause the bushes to light up, but not burn up. I do not believe this is absurd, or irresponsible, biblical exegesis. And I believe New Testament angelology favors moving in this direction.

What

is somewhat unusual about the burning bush story is that the voice of the angel comes from ground level, rather than from some light in the sky. When Isaiah hears his call from God, the Lord was “sitting on a throne high and lifted up.” (Is. 6:1) The voice of angels to the shepherds at the birth of Jesus come from above, from a glowing light. (Luke 2:9) At the baptism of Jesus, the “Spirit” flew down from the sky, and the divine voice was heard coming from above, from heaven. (Mt. 3:17) [I have dealt with the baptism sequence in detail in chapter 4 of my book, *The Bible and Flying Saucers*.] Likewise a divine voice came from the “bright cloud” at the Transfiguration of Jesus. (Mt. 17:5) The voice of Jesus came to Saul/Paul on the Damascus Road from a bright light in the sky. (Acts 9:4-6; 22:7,8; 26:14-18) There are exceptions about voice contact coming from the sky. When the young boy Samuel hears the voice of God, it seems to be disembodied, and comes from something like ground level. (1 Sam. 3:1-14) But it would seem to be consistent with much of biblical “voice revelation” to suggest an extraterrestrial vehicle helped provide the source of the voice at the burning bush, a source that could fly, like the pillar of cloud, or land on the ground in “the midst of a thicket.” I believe this argument is consistent with New Testament angelology; modern UFOs raise technological questions that might relate to the burning bush story, questions that the biblical culture with its lack of scientific knowledge could not address.

The  
Pillar of Cloud and the Parting of the Red Sea



The

story of the parting of the Red Sea begins by saying it did not have to happen. God could have avoided the Red Sea, but decided to lead the way to the Red Sea deliberately. (Ex. 13:17-18) Then the "pillar of cloud and fire" is introduced and described, saying that it "did not depart from before the people." (Ex. 13:22) The Exodus UFO was a constant presence, which we still sing about in hymns such as "Guide Me O Thou Great Jehovah." When Israel arrived at the Red Sea (biblical scholars do not really know for sure what body of water), we find the following narrative, which I have no desire to hide from anyone.

"Then the angel of

God who went before the host of Israel moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them, and stood behind them, coming between the host of Egypt and the host of Israel. And there was the cloud and the darkness; and the night passed without one coming near the other all night.

Then

Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued, and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, [clogging] their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily; and the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel; for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

Then

the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their horsemen." So Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its wonted flow when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled into it, and the Lord routed the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen and all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea; not so much as one of them remained. But the people of Israel walked on dry ground through the sea, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left." (Ex. 14:19-29)

There

has never been a known explanation for the pillar of cloud and fire. Some have given natural explanations, such as that it might have been the shared memory of a volcano. It is sometimes called a "theophany," which only means it was a sign of God's presence. More commonly I suspect it is thought by conservative Christians to be something supernatural, but visible. Likewise the parting of the Red Sea is assumed to be supernatural, although no one can say what supernatural is, since it is beyond nature. But suppose that the angels of God use not the supernatural, but super technology, as one source of their power. And suppose the pillar of cloud and fire is some kind of space vehicle used by the angels. When we read the story this way, these are the possibilities.

The Exodus UFO leads

Israel up to the Red Sea, and then moves behind Israel, keeping the Egyptian army away from Israel until it is dark. The fact that it was dark suggests on this night, whatever caused the UFO to glow in the dark was turned off.

During

the night, "the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land." Those who have supposed there was a "natural" explanation for the parting of the Red Sea try to imagine a powerful wind coming up at just the right time. Or if we approach this story with standard Christian thinking, we imagine the "Lord" as an invisible supernatural force who can do anything any time. Part the Red Sea, no problem! God can do anything.

But

the text makes it clear that the Lord is present in the pillar of cloud. Therefore, the writers of the story understood that the "strong east wind" was somehow created by the pillar of cloud. The text does not tell us when the pillar of cloud moved from between the army of Israel and Egypt to a position right over the sea channel, but when we next find the Exodus UFO reported, it is above the sea channel, according to verse 24, "in the morning watch";

I

believe the Exodus UFO moved to a position above the sea, and then used its propulsion system, some kind of power beam, to part the sea. I do not know what kind of power this is, UFO researchers do not know what kind of power makes modern UFOs fly. By and large, modern UFO propulsion systems seem almost silent. Whatever the system is, that is what I believe caused the "walls of water," one on the right, one on the left, an idea that seems impossible to our scientific minds. But it may not be impossible to those flying our modern UFOs.

One

of the side effects of this propulsion beam would be that wind would blow out each open end of the channel. The Jews were going from West to East, they reported an East wind "caused by the Lord" in the UFO. If the Jews had been on the Eastern shore, heading West, I suspect they would have reported that the Lord caused a strong West wind to blow all night. One further effect of this beam

technology would be to dry out the sea bed. There has been speculation among UFO researchers that UFO propulsion systems have a microwave effect on the ground, often drying it out for a long period after a UFO has landed. What should be noted is that there was no wind reported during the crossing. What held the walls of water in place during the crossing? Or, if a strong wind were blowing in their face, why didn't this make crossing difficult, or impossible?

A similar question can be asked concerning beam technology. If some kind of power beam moved the water back, and dried out the sea bed, why didn't this power beam crush, or fry, the Jews when they crossed? A possible answer would be that the power beam could be phased out in the center, leaving two walls of power on each side to keep the water in place, while leaving the center of the channel power free for the Jewish crossover.

The textual evidence for this possibility comes next. The Egyptians pursued Israel into the open sea channel. "And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down upon the host of the Egyptians, and discomfited the host of the Egyptians, [clogging] their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily;" (Ex. 14:24-25a)

Most of us forget these verses in the text. Our minds go naturally to the next step, Moses raises his hands, and the walls of water fall in on the Egyptians. But we have this text to deal with first. The Jews have crossed safely, they think they are safe, except here come the Egyptian chariots. Has God saved them by this miracle of the parting of the Sea, only to let the Egyptians kill them anyway?

Something strange happens. The pillar of cloud is the focus of what happens next. The Lord in the pillar of cloud and fire "looked down upon the host of the Egyptians."

This is a strange image. When I look at someone, in a way, nothing has really happened. But the text says that the Lord, by this "look down," did damage to the Egyptians. The text does not say, "The Lord turned on the beam technology, and crushed the Egyptians." These were not technological people, they would not say that. But they knew that something—an invisible force, like a stunning glance—came down from above. What happened?

The phrase says the Lord's "look down" discomfited the host of the Egyptians, [clogging] their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. The "look down" defeated the Egyptians, stopped them in their tracks, by doing something to the chariot wheels, so that

the chariots drove heavily. The horses could only move the chariots with great effort. The reader will notice that I have placed the word "clogging" in brackets. That is because the proper translation here is in dispute: there are three possible translations of what happened to the chariot wheels according to the RSV: clogging, binding, or removing (breaking).

Here

is Michael Heiser's response to my analysis of the parting of the Red Sea. "These details are not in the text. I challenge you, Barry, to give us all the text—chapter and verses—where Egyptians were knocked flat off their horses by "an invisible force" (it was by the water, and water isn't invisible), chariot wheels broken, horses paralyzed. Give it to us. Again you are deliberately duping readers here. NONE of this is in the exodus account of the account of the crossing. ZERO. This is inexcusable on your part. "And then later he says, "show me the RSV note (give me an edition, a copyright year, something) that says the wheels were affected by the cloud. I don't believe it exists." (Blog 5)

Here

is as direct an answer as I can give. I have several editions of the RSV. The one I have used lists the Old Testament as having a copyright date of 1952, New Testament 1946, and references 1959, published by Nelson. But all editions have the same footnote. The word in the text itself is "clogging," but there is a "q" after clogging, and the footnote reads as follows: "Or binding. Sam Gk Syr: Heb removing." At this point we have three possible words: clogging, binding, or removing (which I take to be breaking off the wheels.)

Heiser

himself says further, "My reason is that the Hebrew word behind the RSV English is a very common verb (swr—to turn aside); note that the LXX may have something different—it is where the "clogging" translation actually comes from). Doesn't seem too complicated to me. Heiser then makes the case for mud being in the sea bed even though the text says several times that the sea bed was dry. "It doesn't mean there's no water in it like it's a desert. Humans can walk on ground that heavier object (sic) (like horses and chariots) cannot. Anyone who's had a bike or car stuck knows the wheels "turn aside" in ways you don't want them, making for inoperative conditions. Pretty simple. A common word." (Blog 5)

Now

we have four choices for translation of the key word: Heiser's—to turn aside, and three from the RSV—clogging, binding and removing. Heiser supposes that the RSV choice of clogging is based on the Septuagint (LXX) version. But my understanding of the RSV footnote is that the LXX version, along with the Samaritan Hebrew text, and the Syriac Version of the Old Testament, read "removing." I believe the word "clogging" is just something the RSV translators made up, because they could understand how the Lord's "look down" could either bind or remove the chariot wheels, and therefore joined Heiser in inventing mud for the wheels to get stuck in, or slide around in, if you prefer Heiser's "to turn aside" explanation. [Heiser complains that in suggesting the pillar of cloud and fire was a space craft, I make "the Israelites sound like idiots. Give them some credit." (Blog 5) But when Heiser is doing his exegesis, he says the Israelites do not know the difference between dry ground and mud. I say, give the Israelites some credit.]

[Nelson's

Complete Concordance

to the RSV indicates that Ex. 14:25 is the only place in the RSV where the word "clogging" is used. The New Revised Standard Version follows the RSV in using "clogging," but omits "binding" while retaining "removing" in the footnote. The King James version reads, "And took off their chariot wheels;" the Revised English Bible reads "He clogged their chariot wheels;" the footnote reads "clogged: so Samar; Heb. removed." One Jewish translation of the Torah, published in 1962, reads, "he locked the wheels of their chariots so they moved forward with difficulty." The possibility of "locked" is very instructive.]

My

interpretation is this: the Lord's "look down" was some kind of power beam, which either broke the wheels off from the chariots, or else heated up the metal in the axles so much that the metallic expansion caused the wheel hubs to lock, freeze up or bind on the axles. Iron and bronze would be used in making the axles, as well as the hubs, of the wheels. If some type of "beam technology" caused the metal in the axles, or hubs, to heat up, they would expand, and the wheels would fail to turn. They would bind or lock. If the Jews, witnessing the difficulty of the horses trying to pull chariots, saw that the wheels were to bind, or lock up, then they would indeed "drive heavily." On the other hand, if some type of beam technology "removed" the wheels, or broke them off,

likewise the chariots would “drive heavily.” If the wheels were broken off, then “removing” would be the correct translation. If the wheels locked up on the axle, then “binding” would be the correct translation. In any case, if the wheels either “bound” or were “removed,” we do not need mud to explain the difficulty the chariots faced and that the Jews witnessed. The Bible says the sea bed was dry ground.

One

of the best UFO books published in 2009 was UFOs and the National Security State: The Cover-up Exposed. 1973-1991, written by Richard M. Dolan. This is the second volume of a projected three volume work, following UFO history from 1941 to the present. Dolan is a trained historian, with a master’s degree in history as well as a certificate in political theory from Oxford University. His book contains hundreds of UFO sightings from around the world, and Volumes One and Two are necessary reading for anyone who takes UFOs seriously. [See my review of Dolan’s book in the December 2009 issue of the MUFON UFO Journal. Dolan’s list of “Acknowledgements” is a page and a half long, and interestingly, right in the middle, we find this name: Michael Heiser, Ph.D.]

Dolan

tells of a UFO case involving two brothers on February 14, 1974, in the state of Nevada. Dolan reports that the brothers were driving a U-haul truck, loaded with their parents’ furniture, when they spotted a UFO following them, and then coming at them. “They described feeling as though they had “been hit by a blast of wind or force field.” The engine lights went out, steering was gone, and—they claimed—the truck floated momentarily, came back down and coasted to a stop.” After they stopped, a huge light came toward them. They experienced some kind of strange state for about twenty minutes before they flagged down a car and sought help, since their truck was damaged. “When a tow truck hauled it away, the rear wheels of the damaged truck fell off. Upon examination, it needed new tires, a new rear axle, new outside housing, and gears.” (Dolan, op. cit., pp.

29, 30) My question is: if this story is true, what kind of damage might this alien technology do to chariots at the Red Sea? Michael Heiser would say “this is not scientific proof, it is only a story which we cannot check for reliability.” I would agree. But we do not really have “scientific proof” that the Red Sea parted. It is a “faith decision” that Heiser and I share that the Red Sea parted, as the Bible describes.

When

I raised the issue of UFO propulsion systems, and its relevance to the parting of the Red Sea, here is what Michael Heiser said. &ldquo;Here&rsquo;s an even better question about the propulsion system, Barry. Since you associate fire (pillar of fire, cloud = smoke) with the UFO propulsion system, how is it that a combustion engine is capable of space travel? Huh? Can you introduce us to an astrophysicist who would affirm that combustion engines are capable of deep space travel? Give me a break.&rdquo;(Blog 5)

I have never said that UFOs operate by a combustion engine, or even like a rocket. I do not know anyone in MUFON who believes UFOs operate by any type of propulsion system that we now understand. In *The Bible and Flying Saucers*, published more than 40 years ago, I speculated, with those like Donald Keyhoe, that UFOs may have some type of anti-gravitational propulsion system. (For an exploration of possible answers concerning UFO propulsion technology, read the book by NASA scientist Paul R. Hill, *Unconventional Flying Objects: A Scientific Analysis*, 1995, especially chapter VII, &ldquo;Direct Evidence of Force Field Propulsion.&rdquo;)

I have tried to present my case for believing that we need to explore the biblical doctrine of angels, and the Exodus story, in light of our current UFO situation. Michael Heiser believes the way in which I exegete the Bible is false, my work is &ldquo;nonsense.&rdquo; Even if Heiser were to read the above material he may still believe my views are nonsense. How are we to understand that what is nonsense to Heiser seems plausible to me? It relates to how the issues of faith, science and epistemology relate in the way we do our reasoning. For instance, Heiser brings to the Red Sea story the assumption that the pillar of cloud is not a UFO, and therefore he does not expect any power to come down from above, and lock or break off the wheels of the chariots of the Egyptians. He therefore, like the RSV Bible translators, creates a little mud to &ldquo;clog&rdquo; the chariot wheels. But since I believe UFOs are real, and angelic, I look at the pillar of cloud as a UFO which may have some kind of &ldquo;beam technology&rdquo; that would produce the signs that the Jews reported. In other words, the previous assumptions Heiser and I bring to the text determine how we interpret the text. I do not think Heiser&rsquo;s &ldquo;mud&rdquo; explanation is absurd or nonsense. Mud made sense to the RSV translators. But I think it is wrong, and I think the text says it is wrong. There was no mud. This brings us to our next level of analysis.

II.

## FAITH, SCIENCE AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Michael

Heiser and I are perhaps not too far apart in the way we approach our understanding of the Bible. He says he is not a "fundamentalist to fundamentalists," (Blog 1) and neither am I. He does not insist that the Bible is infallible, especially in scientific matters. He says, "The Bible never claims to be a science book." "It never claims that a round flat earth with a dome is truth that is binding on us. Some of its writers simply presume it because that's what they are. God didn't make them super-humans to avoid such things. I could go on and on here, as this is one of the things that I think the conservative church gets very wrong." "God knew the writers of Scripture didn't know squat about science." (Blog 3) Like Heiser, I do not think there is a dome or "firmament" above the earth. (Gen. 1:6) Heiser accuses me of writing nonsense in my analysis of the Red Sea, but I notice that Heiser does not accuse me of "nonsense" in believing that the Red Sea parted, it is only nonsense that I would say a UFO caused the parting. He says the biblical people can be trusted to report "on the basis of experience" the things they observe. (Blog 3) This is also my view—the biblical people saw the Red Sea part, saw the pillar of cloud, and that is why the story is in the Bible. The church of Christ exists in no small part because of reports such as this, and the faith conclusions about God that follow from this. I presume, therefore, that Heiser believes in the existence of the angelic order that the Bible presents, based on what the biblical people said they saw. How then does our Christian understanding of the angelic order fit in with our modern scientific cosmology? When one of my Princeton Seminary professors denied the Ascension of Jesus because we no longer believe in a three-decker universe, Heiser pronounced this "epistemological garbage." (Blog 3) I agree with Heiser that the biblical people could see Jesus taken up, but not necessarily have an accurate scientific cosmology of "where he was going," or where heaven was. But at the same time, the position taken by my professor is very common now. Many liberal Christians believe that the whole angelic order is mythological, does not exist in any sense. Heiser and I do not think either the parting of the Red Sea, or the angelic order, are mythological. But if the angels are real, and if the biblical people did not "know squat" about science, how are we to understand the angelic order in light of modern science?

### Epistemology

deals with how we know what we know, or at least how we explain what we think we know. It is part of my epistemology that knowing and believing are not the same thing, but they do have overlap. The main difference between faith and science, from my point of view, is the degree of certainty that science tries to achieve, and perhaps the methodology by which certainty is achieved, and the way evidence is gathered. Let us suppose a scientist wants to know the effect of vitamin B on rats. Several rats can be obtained, two separate cages established, the rats in one cage will be given a diet that includes vitamin B, the other cage will be fed the identical diet, but without vitamin B. Rats in both cages will be examined frequently to establish differences. After the results are established, other



scientists are free to follow the same procedure, and either confirm, or deny, the results of the earlier experiment. Notice that the scientist has considerable control over the objects of his (or her) experiment. Heiser sometimes uses the term "hard science," and the above experiment is what I would call an example of hard science.

There

are places in life where hard science does not work well, such as the decision that a man and a woman make about getting married. The couple might like to know ahead that the other person will be faithful to them, that if they have children, they will agree on parenting standards, that they will be financially successful together. But each person is in a sense a "free being," they are not rats in a cage, they cannot use "hard science" to decide whether their marriage will succeed. They go ahead with the marriage based on faith. Usually it is not blind faith, it is based on some evidence, the couple usually has dated for a while, they may even have filled out some kind of questionnaire that will reveal their "compatibility." But this kind of pre-marriage evidence is what we might call "soft science." When a man asks a woman to marry him, the woman may expect a little "hard science" as proof of his love in the form of a diamond. Nevertheless, often marriages work, based on faith. And this is understood to be the basis for all who follow the God of the Bible, it is a faith decision based on evidence, but "soft evidence." I cannot "prove" the Red Sea parted, but it is part of my faith. There are many, of course, who do not believe the Red Sea parted, or that Jesus rose from the dead. Faith is the name of what I call "God's Game," and Hebrews chapter 11 spells out the way in which from the time of Abraham, this is a critical dimension of God's will, that we believe by faith, not by sight. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) When doubting Thomas believed after touching the resurrected Jesus, he did not receive praise for his faith. Faith involves taking risks that go beyond "hard science." Faith is the way in which we know God indirectly, a way that keeps us from being destroyed by the direct experience of God's power. With these epistemological assumptions in place, I now want to examine some of Heiser's statements about the "nonsense" of my theology.

Heiser

says, "We don't know when our interpretation is infallible. But I'd suggest we 'can't' know if it's nonsense. For your hermeneutical approach to be reasonable, you need to establish that (a) there really are intelligent aliens and (b) that they came here in antiquity. I suppose you have incontrovertible physical evidence of intelligent alien visitation that would make your interpretative approach reasonable? That would give it a deserved place at the intellectual table? Why don't you turn it over to the dozens of dedicated UFO researchers?" "Problem is, everyone reading this knows that 'hard' scientific proof of ET life and visitation is non-existent, no matter how much we'd like to have it." (Blog 1)

[It is here that Heiser inserts a footnote, saying in effect that believing in God does not require similar hard science evidence, because God is not part of the created order. I would agree, but the parting of the Red Sea is presented as an event in our created order, and therefore is open to scientific investigation. Believing in the parting of the Red Sea is not the same thing as believing in an uncreated God. On what basis does Heiser believe the parting happened? Not hard science I would think. In fact, there are thousands of living witnesses to modern UFO events—;not a single living witness to the parting of the Red Sea. UFO science may not be as “hard”; as Heiser demands, but it is a lot “harder”; than a scientific approach to the issue of the parting of the Red Sea.]

Heiser thus says, if I cannot prove UFOs exist, my theology is nonsense. Here is my response. If Heiser were an atheist, or even a liberal Christian who does not believe angels exist, I would understand why what I have written is “nonsense.” But Heiser seems to take the parting of the Red Sea as a literally observed and experienced event, as I do. And he therefore seems committed to the angelic order, which Exodus 14:19-29 says was present and caused the sea to part.

My point is this. I should not have to prove to Heiser that an extraterrestrial reality exists. Any Christian who believes angels are real already believes in extraterrestrial life, and believes extraterrestrial life can come to earth, and be seen by humans. Angels come down from the sky, as did the angel at the empty tomb of Jesus. Where do angels come from? Where is heaven? I do not know, but they come from heaven, not earth. Chapter V in my book, *The Bible and Flying Saucers*, is entitled “Where Is Heaven?” I speculate that heaven may be in another dimension. Could heaven be on another planet? I have no idea, but my point is, any Christian who believes angels are real already believes in extraterrestrial life. Therefore Heiser should not demand that I provide proof that modern aliens exist. Rather, he should see the need to join in this quest: How do we discover whether modern alien reports are or are not sightings of the angels of God? I can understand atheists demanding proof of alien visitation, but I do not understand it from Heiser. Concerning whether or not the pillar of cloud and fire might be a spaceship, since Heiser himself says the biblical people did not know “squat”; about science, we should not expect the biblical people to call a spaceship a spaceship, even if they saw one. Thus whether or not the pillar of cloud and fire is a spaceship is a matter to be interpreted in light of what it looks like, and what it does.

From the Christian side, I believe we have an identification problem. Suppose God ordered his angels to fly the pillar of cloud and fire across the United States during one night, maybe at a height of a thousand feet. Suppose Michael Heiser and his friends see it. The next day a United States Air Force spokesman announces that what was seen by thousands was a meteor. Suppose that the pillar of cloud was sent as a sign to the church of Christ to encourage our faith, to fight the atheism of our age. On what basis would Heiser, or any Christians, say to the world: This was not a meteor, our government leaders are lying, this was the pillar of cloud and fire of the Exodus. This is what I mean by an identification problem. When Heiser demands "hard scientific proof" of UFOs, he basically takes himself out of what I call God's Faith Game, and makes fun of me for trying to interpret the signs of our time. Signs are examples of "soft science" given to us to encourage our faith. In the day of judgment we will be justified by faith, not by hard science. Conservative Christians who believe UFOs are demonic are at least on target in this sense: they know that UFOs present an identification challenge to the church. Identification of the nature of UFOs cannot just be left to "hard science."

Furthermore, I am not sure "hard science" can even exist in relation to UFOs. I realize that the general public sees UFOs as a scientific, space age issue. And if we think further, we suppose it is a problem for science and the governments of the world, in case there is danger of an alien invasion, not counting the Second Coming of Christ as an alien invasion, of course. But if we think about the issues here, the techniques of hard science do not apply well. Let us go back to the vitamin B experiment with rats in the cage. Let us suppose that the rats in the cage have almost human-like intelligence, and start hearing alien stories. "An alien abducted me from the cage. He was funny looking, did not look like a rat. Put a needle in me, then put me back in the cage." Several of these stories start spreading in the rat cage, some rats do not believe the abduction stories, other rats in the cage demand that the government do something about it, carry on a study, get some scientists on it, to solve once and for all the alien rumors. In the UFO situation we face, it appears that the UFO reality is the scientist, and we are the rats. We are not able to get "control" of that reality, in order to do what Heiser calls "hard science." This is what led me to write the article for the MUFON UFO Journal, "The God Hypothesis." (October 1988) UFOs seem to be in a "god like position" in relation to humans. Perhaps one reason UFOs do not "invade" earth and take over is that they may already be in charge, as we might expect the angels of God to already be in charge.

I do not believe it is wise for Christians to sit on our hands waiting for scientists to tell us whether UFOs are real or not. Scientists are not in charge of UFO science, the governments of the world are. When I reviewed Richard Dolan's book (referenced above) I said, "Dolan is a trained historian, not a scientist. His point of view as an historian is based on this inconvenient truth: scientists control science, but politicians control scientists, particularly if scientists are doing anything that is of interest to 'the national security state.'" If we suppose that our modern Pharaohs are going to tell us the truth about UFOs, then we have not learned our Bible lessons about the deceptive practices of human leaders.

Heiser

suggests that my view that UFOs might relate to the Bible is remotely possible, but so remote as to be ridiculous. He imagines "an ET race of speckled goat-beings" who are very smart, and might have been involved in the development of the human race, an idea which Heiser sees as just as silly as believing UFOs might be real.

Timothy Good is a British UFO researcher who published the book, *Above Top Secret: The World Wide UFO Cover-up*.

The title of the book is taken from a letter from the late Senator Barry Goldwater, who stated that he was told that UFO information at Wright Patterson Air Force Base is classified "above top secret," and therefore even Senator Goldwater could not have this information. I would say to Michael Heiser: let me know when a United States Senator is told by an Air Force official that information concerning "speckled goat-beings" is classified above top secret. Or when should we expect that Richard Dolan may soon write a book with the title, *Speckled Goat-Beings and the National Security State: The Cover-up Exposed?*

It

seems to me that Heiser is very trusting of the way the governments of the world operate, more trusting than Christians ought to be. Heiser says he is kind of for government release of UFO information, unless it is a national security issue. "But for the record, if the government has information that it ought to make public, they should pony up if there is no real national security threat (and I do not believe there is, but I'm not privy to that sort of information), then it's morally wrong to withhold it. I assume Barry would allow that national security caveat as well. You'd have to be loony to think that the government owes us all the information it has on any given subject." (Blog 4)

Suppose

that some Egyptians went to Pharaoh, and said something like this: "Pharaoh, there are rumors that the plague of flies that we just experienced was caused by some kind of extraterrestrial power. We have heard that you have been warned there will be other plagues by some Jewish guy named Moses." And Pharaoh responds, "No comment, this is a national security issue." Is this where it ends? Should the Egyptian shrug his shoulders and say, "I am not privy to national security information?" The arrogance of Pharaoh's national security state will in a few months lead to the death of the first-born sons in every Egyptian home. I worry a lot about the questions Christians are not asking of our modern national security state.

Jesus

said we should give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. The question I am asking is: Do UFOs carry the angels of God? And if they do, then they belong to God, not to Caesar. By surrendering the UFO issue to the national security state, Heiser may be—I say may be, because I do not have proof—surrendering what is God's to Caesar. In any case, I do not think it is "nonsense" from my Christian point of view to be wondering the things I am wondering. Speckled Goat-Beings are not the issue. For Christians right now UFOs are a faith issue founded on "soft science," as

faith always is.

## Christian Faith in an Age of Scientific Doubt

I am concerned about the signs that the Christian faith is being abandoned in the name of science. Heiser and I are partly in agreement on this, although I think the apostasy of our age is greater than Heiser seems to think. (In fact, the unwillingness of the church to even admit UFOs are a faith challenge is one sign to me of the apostasy of our age. It is as if we have no memory of, or hope for, God's angels being present to our generation.)

Heiser and I agree that Bishop John Shelby Spong represents a serious embarrassment to the Christian faith. I had made a brief negative comment about Spong in my article, and Heiser responded, "For the record, Spong is one of the sloppiest thinkers I've ever read." (Blog 3) I am presenting some material by Spong here because I believe it is significant that a Protestant Bishop can write these things. Spong has written several books, one of which is *Why Christianity Must Change or Die*. In the early part of his book he explains his view of the Apostles' Creed, which begins, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth." He states strongly that he believes in God, although where he got his idea of God is not clear, apparently not from the Bible. Spong goes on to say he objects strongly to calling God "Father," (as Jesus did), this is patriarchal and oppressive, and he does not like the concept of "almighty"; either; no serious thinking person today believes God is almighty.

"Other aspects of the almightiness of God found in the Bible are also notably missing from the expectations of people living in this modern world. The Bible suggested that this almighty God had the ability to rain bread called "manna" from heaven upon the favored people to save them from starvation in the wilderness (Exod. 16). But there appears to be no such divine rescue of starving people in our time; at least no heavenly bread falls upon them. In our generation starving people in Somalia, Rwanda, and in the region of the world

known as the sub-Sahara simply die, unless human relief operations are mounted.

This

&ldquo;almighty&rsquo; deity also appeared, in the sacred text, to have had a not-so-noble political and moral agenda. The biblical God is portrayed as having had the power to split the Red Sea to allow the chosen ones to walk through on dry land (Exod. 14:1-22) and as stopping the sun in the sky to allow the people of Israel more time to achieve a military victory over the Amorites (Josh. 10:12). But in the same sacred text, that Red Sea was also closed by this God just in time to drown the hated Egyptians (Exod. 14:23-31), and that sun was finally allowed to set as soon as the slaughter of the wicked Amorites was complete (Josh. 10:13). What kind of almighty power is this? Is it even ethical? Is one capable of worshiping so capricious a deity who appears to embody the worst of our tribal and political hatreds? (p. 9)

Spong

has described the book of Exodus as a book of superstitions, and a wide range of modern liberal scholarship agrees with him, as I demonstrated in &ldquo;Hermeneutical Rape.&rdquo; Heiser agrees that there are many who do not even believe the Exodus ever happened, but protests that we should not conclude that &ldquo;truth is determined by consensus.&rdquo; (Blog 5) But thousands of seminary students are learning from respected professors like Walter Brueggemann who concedes that we want to avoid sounding like &ldquo;silly supernaturalists.&rdquo; (Mandate to Difference, p. 197) What Brueggemann does is go heavy on the poetry of the Old Testament, and light on the historical narrative. This modern mind set has taken its toll. It has taken church members a while to understand that there is little of God&rsquo;s power left in modern liberal Christianity.

My

own denomination, the Presbyterian Church (USA) had 4 million members in 1983, it now has 2 million members. Heiser mentions that he does not &ldquo;affiliate with a Christian denomination.&rdquo; (Blog 3) Perhaps this has helped him avoid the grief of living through the destruction of the church as I have experienced it. My sense has been that no human driven &ldquo;plan for renewal&rdquo; would save my church, only a sign from God that would save us from slavery to the scientific skepticism of our age. Perhaps I am wrong that UFOs are that sign, but I have no doubt about the decline of my church.

I

was brought up to believe that when the angels of God saved the Jews at the Red Sea, this was a sign of God&rsquo;s saving power, and the manna from the sky was a sign that God could feed us, and sustain us, day by day. This power of God to save is then transferred to Jesus in the New Testament, who saves us from sin on the cross, and from death in the empty tomb. If we trust in Christ, he becomes our

man for our daily journey of faith. (John 6) Does Spong understand that by destroying the God of the Old Testament, he destroys Jesus as savior? Yes he does. Chapter 6 is titled: "Jesus as Rescuer: An Image that Has to Go." (p. 83-99) From my point of view, Spong does not "change" Christianity, he destroys it.

Thus

when modern atheists like Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and Christopher Hitchens condemn the God of the Bible, they have a Christian Bishop cheering for them. Michael Heiser suggested I would feel less bleak about our current situation if I read a book by Alister McGrath (co-authored by Joanna C. McGrath) entitled The Dawkins Delusion. I had actually bought and read this book when I was at Oxford University in England two years ago attending a conference, but I did not find the McGraths' book helpful.

At

the beginning of chapter 4 we find this from the McGrath book. "The God that Dawkins does not believe in is 'a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.' Come to think of it, I don't believe in a God like that either. In fact, I don't know anybody who does." The McGrath book goes on to confess belief in "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild." (p. 46)

This

might seem to be a good way to melt the hard atheism of Dawkins except for this. The McGraths did not start the Dawkins quotation at the beginning. The Dawkins quotation begins: "The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive... (Richard Dawkins, The God Delusion, p. 31)

What

are we to make of this omission: that the McGraths do not believe in the God of the Old Testament? The God of Jesus is the God of the Old Testament. How do the McGraths claim to believe in Jesus, but not the God of Jesus? Or do the McGraths really believe in the God of the Old Testament, but it would have made their book too long to explain why all, or some of the descriptions of the God of the Old Testament made by Dawkins, are not accurate?

In

the chapter on "What are the Origins of Religion?" almost all the ideas are taken from psychological theories, and anthropological studies, which perhaps is not surprising, given that Joanna McGrath is a professor of psychology at the University of London. Never in the book is there any hint that the biblical faith might have been influenced by angelic powers, extraterrestrial powers. What we find is the McGraths believe in an ethical Jesus, but not a savior Jesus, not a Jesus with an extraterrestrial identity. My point is this:

even those who appear to be defending Christianity are in a nearly hopeless intellectual situation if the assumption is made that the biblical angelic powers are mythological. According to current intellectual theory, all religions are the invention of the human mind and human culture. (I do not consider this an unreasonable point of view, I just don't think it is true.) This is what our children are learning in their "Religious Studies" classes at the university. For modern intellectuals, there is no such thing as "Divine Revelation," which is the core concept of both the Old and New Testament. Jesus as God incarnate is of course the central figure of that revelation in the New Testament.

## The Power of Enlightenment Doubt and Our Current Faith Crisis

How  
did we get to this point? Although enlightenment skepticism was planted in the 1700's, we are now eating the harvest. Only a brief sketch can be attempted here. In the 1800's much doubt developed in the church about the second coming of Christ. It had been hundreds of years since the resurrection, where was the coming, the parousia? Albert Schweitzer published a land mark book entitled The Quest of the Historical Jesus (1910), which concluded either that the early church, or Jesus, was deluded about his second coming. In so far as the ministry of Jesus was understood to have three main dimensions or offices—prophet, priest and king—the conclusion of Schweitzer, in so far as it was accepted by the liberal church, eliminated the role of Christ as priest and king in any meaningful sense. This left the ethics of Jesus, and his "prophetic" role, as the main religious identity in Jesus that liberals would affirm. The New Testament of course saw the Ascension of Jesus, and his Second Coming, as a single package. As two angels explained at the Ascension, "This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11)

This  
meant liberal theology had no eschatology, no hope for the return of Christ, no serious hope for life after death, and hope for the Last Judgment, when the justice of God will be established. Not surprisingly, liberals could not stand the pain of seeing evil in the world, knowing there was no hope for justice after death. It was easy for liberals to borrow from Marxists, who were not waiting for justice in heaven, but were busy liberating the oppressed on earth. Liberal theologians quoted Luke 4:18, in which Jesus, reading from Isaiah, said that he came "to set at liberty those who were oppressed." Although liberation theology began in Latin America, it soon became part of black liberation theology in the United



States, followed by feminist and gay liberation theology. Evil was not something individuals did, but rather evil was a class phenomenon. The oppressor class was bad, and the oppressed were good. If you belonged to the oppressed class—blacks, Hispanics, women, gays—you were good, and if you were among the oppressors—usually white heterosexual males—you were bad. Individual morality did not count for much in liberation theology. Justice was based on class analysis, not individual morality. Liberation theology has made life more just for some groups of people, but it is very selective, and creates new stereotypes in the very process of trying to get rid of old ones.

But

one of the more important results of modern liberalism is the view that the only just society would be a classless society. Therefore no one should because of race, sex, national origin, or religion, be treated as superior, claim any “exceptionalism,” as the term is now used by liberals.

If

we apply this concept of justice, then any religion that claims to have more truth than any other religion is in a sense “oppressive” to those whose claims are said to be weaker. How does one establish truth if it is “oppressive” to say that any other religion is false? The answer is you cannot, and should not, because it is argued in our post modern philosophical environment that all truth claims are basically a political power grab. Thus the biblical view that the Jews are “God’s chosen people” is itself an evil idea, an example of a power grab. And even worse, the Christian claim that Jesus was God incarnate is a huge act of arrogance on the part of Christians. One of my professors at Princeton Seminary was John Hick, author of the book *The Myth of God Incarnate*. In this book Hick calls on Christians to give up claiming Jesus is God incarnate, for the sake of being able to talk with other religions on an equal basis. This is the classless society and political correctness doing its destructive work on Christian faith. Shame on any religion that thinks its truth claims are true!

[Michael

Heiser had recommended that I read Timothy Keller’s book *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism*.

Keller made note of the danger of Hick’s thinking for basic Christian belief. (p. 11) Keller has written an excellent book in the C.S. Lewis tradition, but he may not convert many scientific or liberal skeptics. As Keller points out, “the infallibility of the Bible” is one of the basic doctrines of his church (p. 43), a belief liberal Christians consider another example of making a truth claim that is really a power grab. I can see the liberal point on this, since I also see the Roman Catholic claim for the infallibility of the Pope as a power grab disguised as religious truth.]

Consequently

we now live in a scientific culture that is basically godless, which is a good thing from the point of those like Richard Dawkins, something to be accepted in the name of intellectual honesty by religious liberals, and a cause for conservative Christians to retreat into shrink wrapped infallibility (biblical or Papal).

With

Jesus as savior drained from our culture, what do we have left? Life that is accidentally caused by the luck of Darwinian evolution, human bodies driven by animal drives for aggressive dominance, vicariously lived out in our sports culture, or in the shopping mall. Without Christ as savior, where is grace, where is forgiveness? Young men come to school or university and start shooting, for no reason, so we are told: unless despair and nihilism are a reason, of course. And then we die, naturally. In losing Christ in western culture, we have lost more than our scientific intellectuals are telling us, more than liberal Christians are telling us. Now what? Has God given us resources to renew hope? Perhaps.

Angels

and the Possibility of Extraterrestrial Life

In

the Fall of 2009 the Roman Catholic Church sponsored a conference on astrobiology, a fairly new science that explores the possibility, and the meaning, of intelligent life on other planets. Ted Peters is Professor of Theology at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, and editor of the journal Theology and Science.

Peters has explored questions such as what is proper ethical practice for interaction with an extraterrestrial life form. If we were to have contact with extraterrestrial life, would that life need Christ as savior, would we have to "preach them the gospel," or would they perhaps be unfallen, without sin? The New Testament does not see Jesus as a local savior, rather "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." (Col. 1:15, 16) How would Christ relate to extraterrestrial beings?

The

astrobiology conference in Rome was not a UFO conference. The Roman Catholic Church has not taken a public position on UFOs. But

Protestants should note this: the Vatican has diplomatic connections that we do not have. I cannot imagine that the higher levels of the Roman Catholic Church have not asked through diplomatic channels: What is the truth about UFOs? The answer from the governments of the world would likely be: UFOs are a highly classified subject, there is some truth to some reports, but no nation plans to make any public announcement in the near future.

The late Roman Catholic theologian Msgr. Corrado Balducci made public statements on Italian television saying he believed UFOs were real, but they came from the "natural order," not the "supernatural order," the order of angels and demons. In other words, UFOs are more an issue for science than for theology, which, of course, is the way the military powers of this world would see it—the way Pharaoh would see it, in case the Vatican should ask. (See my article, "The Balducci Interview and Religious Certainty," MUFON UFO Journal, September, 1998.) It seems unlikely Balducci would have made these kinds of public statements without some kind of high level approval from Rome. In my article, I argued that I think it is early in our UFO studies to assume we can make a distinction between the supernatural, and the super technological.

As Michael Heiser has said, the biblical people did not "know squat" about science. Given the non-technological nature of biblical culture, the proper question is: If the biblical people had contact with some type of extraterrestrial power, how might the biblical people explain the nature of this power, and how would we understand that same power now?

Protestant conservatives have studied UFO reports and have come to the opposite conclusion from that of Msgr. Balducci. Some conservative Protestants argue that UFOs are supernatural and demonic, or if not demons, at least fallen angels. (See books by Gary Bates, Timothy Dailey, Chuck Missler, and Mark Eastman that take the demonic or fallen angel point of view, as well as on line articles by those like Lynn Marzulli.)

We come now to the bitter taste of extraterrestrial life and biblical faith. Wormwood falls from the sky like a star (Rev. 8:11) in the person of Eric von Daniken, and for many, I am von Daniken's much less successful brother. Von Daniken is the author of the multimillion best selling book *Chariots of the Gods?*, translated into many languages, originally copyrighted in 1968, the year *The Bible and Flying Saucers* was published. Von Daniken's thesis is that ancient astronauts visited earth thousands of years ago, and caused what we have thought were the many myths of "gods coming down from the sky," but now we in the space

age should understand these are not myths, they are reports of extraterrestrial visitation. Von Daniken turns to the Bible as one of his sources of ET visitation. Von Daniken's theories have inspired many television programs, especially on the History Channel, exploring the possibility that ancient ET's inspired the building of the pyramids and ancient temples.

Not

surprisingly, von Daniken explores the possibility that the "wheels of Ezekiel are some type of spaceship. But perhaps his treatment of the story of Sodom better illustrates the conflicting cultural, scientific and theological issues that the space age brings us.

Von

Daniken begins exploring the story of Sodom in a chapter titled, "Was God an Astronaut?" He notes how two "angels" came to visit Lot in Sodom, and pleaded with Lot to leave the city quickly, because God planned to destroy it for its wickedness. (Gen. 19:1-28) Sodom seems to have been a city with a little bit of everything. Liberals might see Sodom as the kind of place that would be in favor of gay liberation, and conservatives might understand why the men of Sodom would demonize aliens, except for the bad luck that the aliens turned out to be angels. The angels finally succeed in getting Lot and his family out of the city, fire and brimstone fall from the sky and destroy Sodom; Lot's wife makes the mistake of looking back, and turns into a pillar of salt.

Von Daniken

speculates that the "angels" in the story are not really angels under the direction of God at all, but rather a bunch of space guys who for whatever reason favor Lot, but otherwise decide that the people of Sodom are some kind of genetic mistake that needs to be destroyed, perhaps with nuclear weapons, which is why Lot's wife kind of melted when she looked back.

He

says, "We may be as religious as our fathers, but we are certainly less credulous. With the best will in the world we cannot imagine an omnipotent, ubiquitous, infinitely good God who is above all concepts of time and yet does not know what is going to happen. God created man and was satisfied with his work. However, he seems to have repented of his deed later, because this same creator decided to destroy mankind. It is also difficult for enlightened children of this age to think of an infinitely good Father who gives preference to "favorite children," such as Lot's family, over countless others." (p. 37)

Using

Michael Heiser's epistemological concept of "nonsense"; here we find two types of nonsense, liberal nonsense and conservative nonsense. Liberals would call it nonsense to take the story of Sodom literally. For liberals, anyone living in our modern age should understand that this is a primitive pre-scientific mythical story. One can imagine Bishop Spong bending over in laughter at the absurdity of von Daniken's book. Spong would suppose that the modern UFO myth, and its cousin the "ancient astronaut" theory, following C.G. Jung (Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies), are examples of bringing back mythological thinking in a space-age disguise. (This explains the liberal rejection of von Daniken, as well as myself.)

For

conservatives, it is "nonsense" to suggest that the angels in the Bible were ancient astronauts. If one holds to a belief in an infallible Bible, this is fairly straight forward. The Bible says they were angels, and therefore they were angels, since the Bible cannot be wrong. But many conservatives have worried. Clifford Wilson worried first by denying that von Daniken had a case in Wilson's book, Crash Go the Chariots (1972), but as evidence of the UFO reality grew, Wilson published The Alien Agenda (1988), moving to what is now the standard conservative view: if aliens are real, they are demons. It is thought this argument protects the Bible from von Daniken's perversion of angels into ancient astronauts. By suggesting that the "ancient astronauts" were in fact the angels of God, and that they use technology, my own work makes the conservative task more difficult, for which conservatives do not thank me.

What

I would say is that von Daniken, like Michael Heiser, does not understand how the Bible eventually separates the concept of God, who cannot be seen in this world, from his angels, who are seen in our physical world. Von Daniken understands that God in his essence is "omnipotent, ubiquitous, infinitely good" and above "concepts of time." How could the timing of the destruction be an issue for such a God? That being the case, the angels are not angels, but rather ancient astronauts, space guys doing scientific stuff, and perhaps using technology to destroy Sodom. This raises the question: even if the "angels" who met Lot are not angels, but rather just space guys, if they are still with us in modern UFOs, might they destroy us if they don't like us? Von Daniken does not explore this question, but it is implied by his logic.

Von

Daniken is also offended that any real God would have "favorite children." Bishop Spong would cheer von Daniken at this point, joining together in preaching political correctness, preaching a God who does not discriminate on the basis of anything, especially religion. The Old Testament focuses on God's "chosen people," and it is exactly this offensive God who parts the Red Sea, saving the Jews, and destroying the Egyptians. For Spong only a "capricious deity" would save the Jews, and destroy the Egyptians. This is the liberal moral argument for giving up belief in an "interventionist God." The horror of the Jewish holocaust under Hitler led many

Jews and Christians to give up totally on the idea of an interventionist, saving God. (My view of the holocaust is that it proves, like the crucifixion of Jesus, why the human race needs saving.) Liberals suppose a God with real power that could just stand by as the Jews were destroyed in the German ovens could not be loving and almighty. I can certainly sympathize with this liberal sense of moral despair, trying to believe in a God who can save, but chooses not to. Learning to live with a powerless God who loves but cannot do much about it is the point of Rabbi Harold S. Kushner's popular book *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. Another title for the book might have been: *Learning to Live Without an Interventionist God*.

But the challenges von Daniken raises are mild compared with the direction others have gone. Von Daniken's argument was that the biblical people were too primitive to recognize advanced technology for what it was, and therefore worshipped the beings in spaceships as gods. Now, says von Daniken, we would know better. Thus, in so far as von Daniken is concerned, we have a "mistaken identity" problem to solve in the Bible. If we read "ancient astronauts" for "angels," we will understand the Bible correctly. Von Daniken did not, however, follow through on the implications of treating the pillar of cloud and fire as a spaceship, as I have done. I see the Exodus as a deliberate act by an extraterrestrial power. I am saying that the extraterrestrial power involved in the Exodus, even though it is a technological power, is serving God's purpose. (Modern missionaries fly in planes. That does not deny their God directed mission.)

But others have read the Exodus story in a secular way, concluding that the whole of the Bible is in a sense some kind of extraterrestrial fraud. (See Patrick Cooke's book, *The Greatest Deception: The Bible UFO Connection*.) And in our modern UFO quest, there have been reports from those who say they have inside "classified" UFO information, that the American government has been in contact with the aliens, and the aliens have revealed they have created life on earth, as well as creating many of the world's religions, including the biblical religion. (Richard Dolan, op. cit., p. 477; Linda Moulton Howe, *An Alien Harvest*, p. 188)

There is indeed a lot of Wormwood to deal with as we try to understand the possible implications of extraterrestrial visitation of the earth and the Bible. Is it all "nonsense," or should we be seeking buried treasure here? Is there an underlying divine pattern that makes sense, gives us coherence? It is easy to understand why some Christians suppose the situation is part of a "strong delusion." (2 Thes. 2:11) There are days I would settle for one strong delusion. I see multiple delusions running at once. I have no easy solution other than to do my best to sort out truth from falsehood, God's possibilities from what seems to me to be the dominant atheism of our age. I believe Jesus is the Christ, not just the moral teacher/nice guy of moderate Christian liberalism, or the political revolutionary of radical Christian liberalism. At the same time, although I believe the Bible is a "unique and authoritative

witness to Jesus Christ," (a faith statement required of my denomination for all who are ordained), I do not believe the Bible is infallible. Therefore, my faith is based on "soft science," not "hard science." Do modern UFOs relate to the angels of Christ in any way? This is the question I have tried to answer for more than 40 years. Heiser has stressed that he does not find my arguments coherent, they seem to be nonsense to him.

Part

of the problem is we have nonsense at several levels. Someone like Bishop Spong would say the fact that Heiser and I each believe the parting of the Red Sea happened is nonsense. Spong might even say it is immoral for Heiser and me to believe in such a "capricious deity." As far as our believing that Jesus is Lord and Savior, this is "religious imperialism." (Spong, p. 11) Spong's religion, such as it is, is what we have come to call at the secular level political correctness. The sin above all sins according to political correctness is to make an arrogant truth claim like: Jesus is Lord. It is an oppressive statement, a "power grab," from the point of view of those who apply class analysis to "religious studies."

Here

is the question for the final section of this article. In answer to Michael Heiser, what kind of coherence do I see between modern UFO behavior, and the angelic reality described in the Bible? My answer is: both the modern UFO reality, and the biblical UFO reality, seem to rule the earth through a technique that could be called "Targeted Intervention."

III.

Targeted Intervention as a Ruling Strategy

War

is not targeted intervention. Following the al-Qaida attack on the World Trade Towers and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the United States invaded both Afghanistan and Iraq. The purpose of the invasions was and is to totally rule those nations in ways that serve the purposes of America. Anyone who resists our purpose in these nations risks being killed.

The

parallel idea to armed invasion in theology is the Second Coming of Christ, and the Left Behind series of novels about the end times pictures this type of heavenly

invasion when Christ returns in very military terms, which liberals find offensive. But the angels are seen as the army of God in the Bible. Eugene H. Peterson, in his translation of the Bible under the title *The Message*, captures the Old Testament understanding of God very well by calling him “God of the angel armies.” This also seems to be the God of Jesus, who could have called on legions of angels to save him, if he asked. (Mt. 26:53)

But when al-Qaida attacked the World Trade Center, this was an example of targeted intervention. No al-Qaida army attacked America, there was no invasion. Rather the Islamic inspired enemy hijacked American planes, and flew them into the Twin Trade Towers, and the Pentagon, killing all on board the planes, including the hijackers.

Although very few al-Qaida lives were lost in the attack, the results have been far reaching. Thousands of American lives have been lost in wars to try to prevent this from happening again, billions of dollars have been spent in the war effort. Although the attack happened almost nine years ago, these were the stories in my local paper on January 3, 2010: the story of a young soldier from our area, shot at Fort Hood on November 5, 2009, now recovering. He was shot by al-Qaida inspired psychiatrist Nidal Malik Hasan, who killed 13 and wounded 30. Another front page story reported President Obama explaining that the al-Qaida agent who tried to blow up a plane near Detroit on Christmas Day was trained in Yemen. On page 11 was the headline: “Iran: We’ll Make Nuclear Fuel.” (Binghamton Press and Sun-Bulletin)

Like dropping a rock in a pond, the ripples of that targeted intervention on September 11, 2001, reach out to every shore. Flying is different now throughout the world. Now major airports are planning to use full body scanners on passengers. A recent cartoon pictured a 747 Airliner in flight with the name of the airline painted on the side: Bare Air. A voice coming from inside the plane was saying, “With heightened security, it was only a matter of time.” Targeted intervention is a very powerful way to influence the rule of a society.

Most governments use targeted intervention, not invasion, to rule their populations. Police do not arrest every speeder, but enough so the general population obeys the laws. Traffic police use targeted intervention. The IRS does not audit every tax return, they use targeted intervention, they audit enough to keep the population generally honest. And they also develop “profiles” of those with certain types of employment, or certain types of high tax deductions, to target for audits.

In terms of national defense the CIA has a certain mystique, because we know they operate in some sense outside the law, perhaps sending



agents secretly to kill persons in foreign governments that do not do what we believe is in our national interest. James Bond is a fictional character that represents the ideal of "targeted intervention." As a British agent who is licensed to kill, Bond is sent to achieve a difficult mission in a foreign land, usually with the understanding that the British government will deny any knowledge of him, or his mission. In *The Bible and Flying Saucers* I suggest that Jesus comes into our world from the heavenly world, like an undercover agent sent to overthrow the evil powers of this world. (pp. 145-148, Lippincott and Marlowe editions)

## Targeted Intervention and the Bible

The  
God of the Bible seems to be able to rule in several ways. God is able to rule nature by natural laws, laws which the sciences of physics, chemistry and biology can discover. These laws seem to be in a way "self governing." This has led to the deistic view of God as the clock maker, who wound up the clock, and now leaves it alone. Since these laws seem to be self regulating, scientists like Richard Dawkins claim they can find no God in nature, or any need for God in nature.

Another  
level of God's rule is by God's Holy Spirit, which seems to be a separate power from the other two persons of the Trinity, the Father and the Son. In the Old Testament creation story, the Spirit of God moves over the waters, (Gen. 1:2) but also can control human minds in some kind of direct way. (Num. 11:16-30; Acts 2:1-21)

But  
God's will to control humans is problematic. God's will is to create us in God's own image, and freedom is a key part of God's being. Freedom is required for love to be real, and God is love. The Gospel of Christ giving himself for us is predicated on his being free to give his life, or not. (Jn. 10:17, 18) Grace is not grace unless it is based on God's freedom to give it, and our freedom to receive it, or reject it. If we are to obey God's basic commandments, as Christ summarized them, to love God, and love our neighbor as ourselves, we have to be free, not robots to the power of God.

Thus

there is a reluctance on the part of God to force his Holy Spirit on us, though God has the power to do that, as the Pentecost narrative shows. How is God to make God's self known to us in a context of freedom? Targeted Intervention, I believe, helps explain one of the techniques by which God gives us the freedom to know him, and yet the option of rejecting him. The God who creates our world, and then "leaves on a long trip" is illustrated in what I call the "Parable of the Out of Town God." (Mt. 21:33-43) In a sense if we look at life from the point of view of "systems analysis," God's challenge, to create humans in God's own image, requires that we be like God: godless. God has no God. Thus we are created on earth, apparently with no Owner, although there are memories of an Owner who left town. Thus when the religious leaders demand a "sign" from Jesus, and he refuses their demand, Jesus maintains the freedom of the religious leaders to reject him. (Mt. 12:38,39) How God is to use his power in relation to us is the "Catch 22" of divine strategy in relation to humans. If God shows us no power at all, we will not believe in him. No one is interested in a powerless God. But if God overpowers us, then God denies our freedom to reject him, and in denying our freedom, God destroys part of the image of God in us. Targeted Intervention is the technique by which God reveals his power in what might be called in medical terms controlled doses.

The

Apostle Paul understood the "paradox of power" that the cross represents. He said, "For Jews demand signs, and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to the Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." (1 Cor. 1:22-24) When the religious leaders asked for a sign, Jesus responded that no sign would be given except the sign of Jonah, who was in the belly of the whale three days and nights. "Nonsense" is not just an issue in regard to my theology. It is an issue in regard to the gospel—as Paul understood, the Gospel of Christ crucified was a stumbling block to Jews, and a joke to Gentiles. What kind of powerful God would let his son die on a cross?

The

cross as a divine symbol of God's power was "nonsense" to both Jew and Greek. As Michael Heiser would ask, "Where is the coherence?" The coherence is in the relation between the two Passovers. In the first story, God can out kill Pharaoh while protecting the Jews who are passed over by the angel of death in Egypt. But on the cross, the killer God becomes the one killed. In Egypt, the power of God is terrifying, and death giving. On the cross, the power of God is subordinated to his love, and love is life giving, not death giving. In the New Passover, Jesus becomes the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and therefore frees us to live without guilt. That is the meaning of the cross, the meaning of Christ as savior, which Bishop Spong wants us to give up. The story of Christ crucified has coherence for those who believe, but not everyone believes, not even bishops.

People

near the cross thought they heard Jesus call for Elijah, they speculated that this was a good place for "targeted intervention," (Mt. 27:47-49) if Jesus were the Son of God, how could God not rescue him? No rescue came except at the empty tomb. As the pillar of cloud deliberately led the Jews up to the Red Sea, the Spirit of

God led Jesus to the cross. Then the impossible became possible, the sea parted, the tomb emptied. Why was there no intervention for Stephen from stoning (Acts 7), yet Peter was saved from prison? (Acts 12) God saves sometimes, but not other times. This seems like the act of a "capricious deity" to those like Bishop Spong. A good God would not drop manna for the Jews, and let those in Rwanda starve, says the Bishop. But targeted intervention is the way God delivers his message of salvation, but at the same time protects our freedom to reject God's ways, if we desire. This divine pattern of targeted intervention represents "coherence" to me, but obviously, not to everyone.

The parable of the Out of Town God is sure the Owner is coming back. Neither modern science, nor Christians of the Bishop Spong type, believe the Owner is coming back. In the parable the Owner sends "representatives" back to collect the rent, and they are rejected. Eventually the owner sends his Son, and the Son is killed. Sending representatives to the vineyard, from the Heavenly World where the Owner now is, represents "Targeted Intervention," a tactical means to try to get humans, in their freedom, to recognize the freedom and rights of the Owner.

The Bible explains God's targeted intervention strategy from the beginning. God plans to destroy sinful humanity, but targets Noah and his family for salvation. The same theme is found in the story of Sodom; the city is targeted for destruction, Lot and his family were targeted for salvation. But the story of the salvation of the Jews as a nation begins with the Exodus. In the beginning, Moses is targeted as the one to speak for God to Pharaoh. Pharaoh is made to know that a divine power favors Israel over Egypt. Pharaoh in his pride resists (in the best economic interests of the national security state), and plagues follow.

The final plague involves killing the first born males of Egypt (as Pharaoh had earlier killed the sons of Israel), but the Jewish sons will be passed over because the blood of a lamb will be painted on the doorposts of Jewish homes. Death is precisely targeted: on a special day, at midnight, Egyptian males only, first-born only. To the modern mind, this seems cruel, arbitrary, un-god like. Bishop Spong is deeply offended by a God like this. I understand how un-God like this seems to the modern mind. I also worry that modern stories of aliens abducting humans from their beds at night may be true. I worry that our modern UFO reality has the power to do exactly what the Bible says happened at Passover. I worry that our modern Pharaohs may be making decisions that put us, or our families, at risk. And I worry that the modern church seems to have no concern at all about the Power that our modern Pharaohs are dealing with.

Christ could be, should be, the lamb whose blood protects us now. But what kind of church will be protected when its Bishops hate the idea of Christ as savior? We have forgotten the Interventionist God. That God is "out of date, out of fashion." Perhaps. Or perhaps God has only been away on a long trip. And we have ignored the angels

who have come to warn us.

It is the signs of God's Targeted Intervention that Bishop Spong hates most. As cited above, parting the Red Sea, dropping manna to feed Israel on their journey, or in the promised land "stopping the sun in the sky." (Josh. 10:12-14) [I do not believe the sun stood still in the sky, or more accurately, that the earth stopped rotating so that the sun would appear to stand still. Nevertheless, if the angelic power that parted the Red Sea, and led Israel to the promised land, decided to keep a battle field lighted into the night, I believe a way could be found. I believe modern UFOs could light a battle field.]

## Modern UFOs and Targeted Intervention

The angels of God did not land on Pharaoh's lawn in Egypt and say, "Take me to your leader," and neither have modern UFOs landed on the White House lawn and said, "Take me to your leader." Many would agree with Michael Heiser that we do not have "hard science" proof of the existence of UFOs. Exactly what that hard science might be, of course, depends on what any individual might demand as proof.

But even without proof of UFO existence, we do have UFO reports, and therefore we can discuss the question: If it should be true that UFOs are real, what do they seem to be doing? The first thing that can be said is they have not invaded earth, as America has invaded Iraq. Hollywood movies have made a lot of money on alien invasion movies such as "Independence Day." But there has been no open invasion. In fact, it is precisely because they seem so shy that those like Heiser can demand "hard science" proof before he will believe.

It appears to me that UFOs, like the angels of God, use targeted intervention as their strategy to achieve their goals. I do not know all of their goals, but one of them seems to be to try to help humanity avoid a nuclear war. In biblical terms, the Owner may have sent agents to keep us from blowing up the vineyard.

## UFOs

may not exist, but they are classified above top secret by our government. As the result of the efforts of private UFO organizations using the Freedom of Information Act to release UFO documents, the agencies of the government, such as the NSA and CIA eventually demanded that the courts exempt UFO documents from FOIA regulations because UFOs were of high national security concern. The American courts ruled in favor of the government. That is beyond dispute. Now perhaps, if we demanded that the government release all information concerning "an ET race of speckled goat-beings," the request would be denied in the name of national security. However, I do not plan to make such a request in order to find out.

## In

1978 an organization called Citizens Against UFO Secrecy was formed; the group "focused on using FOIA lawsuits to obtain UFO documents." (Dolan, p. 161) Attorney Peter Gersten was a key member of this group, and used his legal power to eventually force the government to go to court, and found his effort to release UFO documents defeated by the courts in the name of national security.

## Researcher

Timothy Good explains the situation clearly. "When researchers such as myself request certain UFO records from the CIA, NSA, DIA, and other agencies, we are often told they are exempt from release due to national security or that "records cannot be released because they have been destroyed" or that "the information is properly classified and cannot be released." How curious then, that the official US Air Force position is that "no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of a threat to our national security." (Good, p. 328)

## Before

the government had the backing of the courts in denying FOIA access, researchers did obtain the release of many formerly classified documents. These documents formed the basis of the book by Lawrence Fawcett and Barry J. Greenwood, *Clear Intent: The Government Coverup of the UFO Experience*. (1984) Fawcett and Greenwood report a strange UFO encounter occurred in Iran on September 19, 1976. Rumors of the encounter reached UFO researchers, and through persistence they were able to obtain a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) report confirming the encounter. A UFO was seen from the ground, an American built F-4 jet was sent by the Iranian Air Force to investigate. As it approached the UFO, it lost all electronic instrumentation, and returned to base. But as it made its turn, its electronics were restored. A second jet was scrambled. As it approached the primary object, a second object emerged from the first UFO, and flew at the jet. The

jet pilot was about to “fire an AIM-9 missile at the object but at that instant his weapons control panel went off.” (p. 83; quoted from the DIA report) If UFOs exist, they have perhaps through “targeted interventions” such as this sent a message to the military powers of the world: we can control your weapons.

It is likely that an even stronger message has been sent by the aliens to our military powers. An American listening base in the Florida Keys overheard a conversation between the Cuban pilots of two MIG-21 jets which had been sent to investigate a UFO seen on Cuban radar. “Cuban air defense headquarters ordered the flight leader to arm his weapons and destroy the object. The leader reported his radar was locked onto the bogey and his missiles were armed. Seconds later, the wingman screamed to the ground controller that his leader’s jet had exploded. When he gained his composure, the wingman radioed there was no smoke or flame, that his leader’s MIG-21 had disintegrated.” The UFO then accelerated to a height above 98,000 feet. (Fawcett and Greenwood, p. 196) If American jets have been shot down by UFOs, this would certainly qualify as a national security issue, just as Pharaoh would see the destruction of his chariots in the Red Sea as a national security issue. One thing no military power wants to admit is that our enemy is more powerful than we are. And to admit this enemy is extraterrestrial is not something any president would want to announce.

One thing that seems clear is if UFOs exist, “The U.S. nuclear arsenal appeared to be a target of interest, and there was little the Air Force could do about it.” (Dolan, 2009, p. 85; also see Terry Hansen, *The Missing Times: News Media Complicity in the UFO Cover-up*, pp. 22-28.) In 1987 at Malmstrom AFB in Montana a glowing UFO had disabled more than twenty ICBM’s at two separate sites. On November 7, 1975, a UFO hovered over a missile site designated as K-7. Ground personnel were sent to investigate. When they came within a mile of the site, they refused to go further. “From a safe distance, they noticed it begin to rise. When it reached an altitude of 1,000 feet, it registered on NORAD radar, and F-106 interceptors were promptly scrambled from Malmstrom.” (Dolan, p. 95) Later inspection indicated the computer targeting system on the missile had been disabled, and had to be removed.

A major and very complex confrontation between United States military personnel and UFOs at Rendlesham Forest, England, location of USAF Woodbridge. During the last days of December, 1980, a series of sightings occurred in the woods outside the base, but were investigated by base personnel.

Lt. Col. Charles Halt was one of those who investigated the sightings,

and over a period of time Halt has become more open about what happened, including a UFO landing in the woods, and being touched by base personnel before flying away. There also seems to have been damage done by some type of beam technology to the nuclear weapons stored at Woodbridge.

Dolan

writes, "For years, there were claims that the beams penetrated the Weapons Storage Area at Woodbridge, and even that beams disabled some or all of the nuclear weapons stored there. Given the history of UFOs and their proximity to nuclear weapons, it is certainly plausible." Researcher Peter Robbins says Col. Halt "admitted to them that the beams of light from the UFO somehow penetrated the alternating layers of steel, earth, and concrete of the hardened bunkers. Ultimately they reached the secured areas where the weapons were stored" disabling the firing mechanisms of the weapons. (Dolan, p. 237; also see Larry Warren and Peter Robins, Left at East Gate: A First-hand Account of the Bentwaters-Woodbridge UFO Incident, Its Cover-Up, and Investigation; Robbins makes the observation, "National security has become our state religion. Big Brother is watching us, and the situation in both countries [England and the United States] is urgent. There is a pathology at work here; it will not stop itself." p. 418)

If UFOs exist (indeed!), what have they been doing? For one thing, they have carried out acts of "targeted intervention" against military powers throughout the world. We do not know the full scope of these forms of intervention, how many may have led to the death of military personnel, or how many have involved attacks on our nuclear weapons systems. National security regulations keep us from knowing the truth. But my guess is the UFO aliens have sent a message to the nuclear powers of the world that these weapons are not to be used in battle, and they have not been used since the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. There have been nuclear tests, but no weapons used in battle. I suspect we are in debt to the aliens/angels for the fact that there has been no nuclear war on earth yet.

Does

this mean that the UFOs would use absolute force to make sure a nuclear war never happens on earth? I do not know. In a way, I see the Jewish holocaust during World War II as the willingness of God to let the human race see clearly how evil it can be. The angels of God did not stop the German Nazi crimes, human armies did. But in regard to nuclear weapons, can we really save ourselves from ourselves? The UFOs have not landed in force, like an invading army. But they have carried out "targeted intervention" as a kind of shot across the bow of the military powers of the earth. Modern UFOs seem like they could have handled Pharaoh's army at the Red Sea very well.

It

also seems possible UFOs have saved us from disasters related to the failure of nuclear power generating plants. One such plant is located at the Indian Point Nuclear Facility in Peekskill, New York. On the night of July 24, 1984, about a dozen plant workers saw a UFO hover over the plant. The UFO was "the size of three football fields." It hovered above Reactor #3, the only reactor operating. The electronic security systems of the plant shut down. The UFO was filmed by a camera for fifteen minutes, and the film turned over to government officials. The director of the plant had planned to order plant personnel to fire on the object, but it flew away before the order was given. The next day all personnel were told that "nothing happened," forget what they saw the night before.

Years later

researcher Philip Imbrogno added these points. "He indicated that he had sworn testimony from several plant security personnel that in fact there had been a crack in the wall of Reactor #3, and that they had not only seen an enormous UFO hovering above, but some had seen non-humans walking through the containment wall of the reactor. Apparently, the beings had saved the plant from a nuclear disaster." (Dolan, p. 339)

As

part of my own special version of nonsense, I cannot help thinking of Daniel. "Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He said to his counselors, 'Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?' They answered the king, 'True, O king.' He answered, 'But I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods.'" (Dan. 3:24, 25)

One

can argue that "targeted intervention" is not fair. Bishop Spong might ask, if the angels of God (or UFO aliens) saved many American lives at Indian Point Nuclear facility, why didn't they do the same at Chernobyl? (Dolan says there are reports that a UFO appeared at Chernobyl, and carried out some type of beam activity which lowered the radiation level significantly, or the disaster might have destroyed "half of Europe." p. 366) I cannot fully explain the "ethics" of targeted intervention as those like Bishop Spong seem to demand. But it seems to be very much a pattern of modern UFO reports.

UFOs

have not landed on the White House lawn and announced, "We are in charge now." Rather, they have been like traffic cops, making targeted arrests, and sometimes pulling speeding passengers from their own burning car wrecks. Is this demonic activity, as many Conservative Christians argue? It would seem to me that the nuclear powers of the world are the real demons that threaten to blow up God's vineyard, and we all pay taxes so that we may continue to be slaves to the terror of the national security state.

But

what about UFO abductions? I don't know what to say about UFO



abductions, except they fit the pattern of "targeted intervention." Those abducted seem in some sense to be "chosen people." Abductions make me believe it would be very possible for the angels of the Exodus to kill the first-born of Egypt on Passover night. I am in no position to deny that UFOs might be demons, or fallen angels, at least some of them. But I would ask: are the angels of God more powerful than demons; more powerful than fallen angels? If the answer is "yes," as I believe, then I will go on believing in and hoping for God's mercy. The human race is at risk for destruction every day at our own hands. We do not need any help from demons, or aliens who happen to be fallen angels, to destroy ourselves. We are good at doing our own fallen angel work. I believe in God's love enough to believe God knows that!

A

#### Summary of the Situation from My Biblical Perspective

I believe we have two "contests" going on in our current UFO situation. The first is between the UFOs and the state. As Pharaoh in the Bible held the people of God captive as slaves, so our modern national security state, with the weapons science has built for the state, holding us all hostage to fear of nuclear death every day. I am sure UFO secrecy is motivated for several reasons in the eyes of the state, including fear of "panic" if the truth is released, fear of "religious fanaticism" if the truth is released, fear of "loss of credibility" of world leadership if UFO truth is released. Suddenly the President of the United States, and our military power, our modern Pharaohs, would look very weak and small.

I suspect that in the 1950's the governments of the world worried that we might soon face an alien invasion. But since no invasion has occurred, our human authorities may have concluded the aliens are satisfied to rule the earth through targeted intervention. This means the governments of the world can carry on as usual, with some restrictions. Exactly how these alien ordered restrictions or "Thou shalt nots" have been communicated to human authorities is of course a question we can all wonder about.

The  
second contest or trial in the wilderness is between UFOs and the

church. The state has no trouble knowing that "UFOs are real." The state has taken a punch in the nose from UFO power. But the state has lied to the rest of us, telling us UFOs are a modern mythology, which many religious liberals are only too willing to believe. But the rest of us are caught up in an identification game. The identification game is this: who is lying, the government, or millions of citizens who have seen UFOs? Then on to the next level, if we conclude that UFOs are real, what are they? Just a bunch of space guys from another planet? (Apparent Roman Catholic position.) Or are they demons or fallen angels? (Position of several conservative Protestants.) Or are they the angels of God, who are technologically savvy? (My position.) Or are they space guys who have deceived us into believing they are gods? (Von Daniken and several of his followers.)

The contest between modern UFOs and Christians is to identify the UFO reality properly, and this is very similar to the situation of the Jewish people when Jesus appeared. Jesus appeared, healed the sick, preached good news to the poor, and demanded identification. Some thought Jesus was demonic, that he healed by the power of the prince of demons. Jesus asked his disciples the critical question, "Who do men say that the Son of man is?" (Mt. 16:13) A variety of answers were given, including Elijah, John the Baptist, or maybe even Jeremiah. But Peter gave the divinely inspired answer, "You are the Christ, the son of the living God." (v. 16) We Christians all agree now: what a crime to crucify the Son of God (our excuse is we did not identify him correctly as the Christ.) Here is our current identification question as Christians: How do we know that UFOs do not carry the angels of God? How can we make the proper identification if our modern Pharaohs lie to us about what is going on? If we do not give the right answer in light of God's will, what might be the penalty? Perhaps God would decide that grafting the Jews back onto the vine is justified. "For if God did not spare the natural branches, neither will he spare you." (Rom. 11:21)

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