

From UFOs to God's Glory

Ezekiel's Heavenly Vision

Ezekiel 1:4 As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually, and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal. ⁵ And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, ⁶ but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf's foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze. ⁸ Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: ⁹ their wings touched one another. Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Such were their faces. And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies. ¹² And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went. ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning.

¹⁵ Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them. ¹⁶ As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl. And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel. ¹⁷ When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went. ¹⁸ And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around. ¹⁹ And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose

from the earth, the wheels rose. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹ When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

²² Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. ²³ And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. ²⁴ And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. ²⁵ And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings.

²⁶ And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. ²⁷ And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. ²⁸ Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around.

Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

(Ezekiel 1:4-28)

Ancient Aliens and the Prophet Ezekiel?

*Northeast Syria. The Chebar River. According to the Hebrew Bible, it was here in the 6th century BC that divine beings descended from heaven and made contact with a thirty year old Hebrew priest named Ezekiel.*¹ So the narrator opens the relevant segment in S. 5, Ep. 9 of *Ancient Aliens*—the massively popular cultural phenomenon watched by over 36 million total viewers across 268 episodes and now in its 21st season on The History Channel. Make no mistake, this show has had a massive cultural impact. “Ezekiel was by the River Chebar and he said a great whirlwind came toward him,” interjects Patrick Cooke, author of *The Bible UFO Connection*.” But suddenly he adds, “He described it as a fire enfolding itself, and out of the fire was the color of amber, which is the Hebrew word which means polished spectrum metal which implies that it’s *metallic*. And that it’s *spinning* and that it *lands* in front of him and suddenly out of this whirlwind come four creatures.”

The narrator continues. *In the Bible, the prophet Ezekiel calls these spiritual beings cherubims and describes them as having four faces, four wings, and skin that’s shown like polished bronze ... But what in fact was the mysterious object that touched down in front of*

¹ Italics represent the narrator of “*Strange Abductions*,” *Ancient Aliens*, The History Channel (Feb 22, 2013). Quotations are from the same episode.

Ezekiel and lifted him up to the sky? And who were the strange beings that emerged and shared a vision of the future with the prophet?

“He’s described as the likeness of a man, but they seem to have different faces on them of different animals and some people have interpreted that as perhaps even like a spacesuit you know. Imagine the helmet, oxygen mask, that kind of thing. Could he have been actually seeing something that was a face but didn’t look like a face normally looks?” asks Nick Redfern.

“He’s got the best description of a UFO that’s anywhere in the Bible, because he basically says that the thing looked like a wheel within a wheel, a kind of classic flying saucer description,” adds Barry Downing, Pastor Emeritus of Northminster Presbyterian Church PCUSA, and who in his 1968 book *The Bible and Flying Saucers* stated that Jesus was an extraterrestrial sent to earth to rid the world of sin and wickedness, who left us at his “ascension” in a flying saucer to another planet of perhaps another spatial dimension.²

“It is basically the account of a guy who’s been abducted, whose been told certain things and who’s then returned to the place of origin. It would be what we today would describe as an abduction account,” concludes the late Phillip Coppens in this interpretation that will become one of the most repeated

² See the *Wikipedia* on [Barry Downing](#).

attempts to use the Bible in the series and has become one of the most popular ideas found among UFOlogists,³ because any time you can get the Bible on your side, you've got gravitas and God behind your claim.

It is important to watch all TV, but especially shows like this when they start talking about the Bible, with [an eye on good exegesis](#). They get the location of the Chebar canal wrong (it is in Babylon in Iraq and not Syria). They oversimplify and mislead on the meaning of *chashmal*, which simply means glowing or radiant, but not necessarily metal. Nothing is actually said to “land” anywhere in the text. The creatures are not said to disembark from a craft. There is no language at all of being abducted or of a craft lifting Ezekiel into a sky; rather, it's a vision. It all seems [deliberate imposition of a modern framework](#) of ancient aliens onto an ancient text.

Enter Dr. [Michael Heiser](#). Believe it or not, the first thing I actually saw from him upon researching who he was way back in 2009 when I first discovered him as I was preaching through Exodus, was a talk on Ezekiel 1 that he gave at a Roswell UFO conference perhaps half a dozen years earlier.⁴

³ So many books, such a truly bizarre niche of interpretation. See For example, [Erich von Däniken](#), *Chariots of the Gods?* (1968, pro-ancient aliens); [Barry H. Downing](#), *The Bible and Flying Saucers* (1968, pro-ancient aliens); [Josef F. Blumrich](#), *The Spaceships of Ezekiel* (1974, pro-ancient aliens); [Michael Lieb](#), *Children of Ezekiel: Alens, UFOs, the Crisis of Race, and the Advent of End Time* (1998, viewing the subject historically and academically); [Ronald Story](#), *Guardians of the Universe?* (1980, anti-ancient aliens).

⁴ [Michael Heiser](#), “Ezekiel’s Wheel,” *YouTube*, time stamped [here](#).

Heiser coined a term: *Paleobabble*. This is something like the speculative, unfounded, or nonsensical theories about the ancient world, often involving extraterrestrial or fringe historical claims, that lack rigorous evidence or scholarly support. He saw the idea that Ezekiel 1 depicted a UFO as precisely that.⁵ Today, we will use this paleobabble as a contemporary relevant and influential backdrop as we try to understand the bizarre vision that is before us.

Ezekiel 1 in Its Context

Ezekiel 1:4-28 presents us with **one of the most fantastical, bizarre visions** not only of the Bible, but of the entire ancient world—at least *to the modern reader*. Having been deported from Israel with king Jehoiachin the grandson of Josiah in 597 BC, Ezekiel is among the exiles by the Chebar canal in Babylon. It is five years later and a thousand mile march from Jerusalem where **its temple still stands** for another six years or so, and the nation is being ruled by the

⁵ A shorter written presentation is **Michael Heiser**, “[Ezekiel’s Vision, Part 2](#),” *Paleobabble* (Aug 17, 2008). See also Heiser, “[Notes on Ezekiel’s Vision](#),” *Sitchin is Wrong* (c. 2002). Heiser also taught a longer series on Ezekiel, the first chapter is found at, **Heiser**, “[The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0 112: Ezekiel 1](#) (PDF transcript)” and “[Naked Bible 112: Ezekiel 1](#) (audio),” *Naked Bible Podcast* (Aug 7, 2016). You can access the entire Ezekiel series here: [Category: Ezekiel](#), [drmsb.com](#).

twentieth and final king of Judah, Zedekiah the son of Josiah.

The vision Ezekiel sees presents us with the famous **Merkabah**—the Hebrew word used in places like **1 Chronicles 28:18** for the golden **chariots of the cherubim** that spread their wings and covered the ark of the covenant. It's worth noting at the start that the Mishna gives us a warning about reading and discussing this chapter.

One may not expound the topic of forbidden sexual relations before three or more individuals; nor may one expound the act of Creation and the secrets of the beginning of the world before two or more individuals; nor may one expound by oneself the Design of the Divine Chariot, a mystical teaching with regard to the ways God conducts the world, unless he is wise and understands most matters on his own.

([Mishnah Chagigah 2:1](#))⁶

⁶ **Going Deeper.** While I put this quote from the Misha here as an interesting warning, it is more for those of you who follow or have heard of Moshe Kline's the idea that the Torah is a "woven" text. It is important to state two more points in this note. First, he sees the entire Torah as forming the woven pattern of Ezekiel's chariot! See **Moshe Kline**, *Before Chapter and Verse: Reading the Woven Torah* (2022), (105-110). Second, he sees this warning in the Mishna that narrows to the Merkabah as key to understanding that the Mishna is also a woven text and that the author of the Mishna understood the woven Torah. See **Moshe Kline**, "[The Art of Writing the Oral Tradition](#)" *Academia* (2023): 1-32.

Thankfully, I'm closing in on double Ezekiel's age, and think I have a pretty good grasp of what's going on—or at least certainly better than ancient alien theorists.

That said, let's get a little more context of the chapter. Chapter 1 makes up the first chapter of the 11 that form the first **A.** component of [the chiasm of the book](#). As such, it mirrors the restoration of the [temple](#) at the end. Keep that language in your head: Temple. This is vital to interpreting what Ezekiel sees properly.

- A. Yahweh Comes to His Temple (Ezek 1-11)**
- B. Oracles of Judgment (12-23)**
- C. Jerusalem Besieged (24)**
- D. Oracles Against the Foreign Nations (25:-28:10)**
- E. Judgment on the Fallen Cherub (28:11-19)**
- D'. Oracles Against the Foreign Nations (29-32)**
- C'. Jerusalem Falls (33)**
- B'. Oracles of Restoration (34-39)**
- A'. Yahweh Comes to His Temple (40-48)⁷**

Second, [Chs. 1-11](#) are also loosely chiastic or at the very least a kind of “[ring composition](#)” where we may not see exact matches throughout, but certainly it does circle back to

⁷ Summary of Jiří Moskala, “[Notes on the Literary Structure of the Book of Ezekiel](#),” *Andrews University* (2016): 102-110.

the beginning with a kind of “latch” that hooks it all together.

- A. Vision of God’s Glory (Ch. 1)
- B. Prophetic Commissioning (Chs. 2-3)
- C. Judgment Proclaimed (Chs. 4-7)
- D. **Abominations and Judgment (Chs. 8-9)**
- C’. Judgment Executed (Ch. 10)
- B’. Glory’s Departure Begins (Chs. 10-11)
- A’. Departure of God’s Glory (Ch. 11)

This is why we see the vision of Ezekiel 1 lining up with the same descriptions in Chs. 10-11, something I will mention **a couple of times** today. Besides all of the judgment that follows the opening chapter’s vision, perhaps the most significant element in the storyline is how **the Glory of the Lord**, and image of *both* the Holy Spirit and the Son of God, at first at the Temple’s Threshold (**Ezek 9:3, 10:4**), gets up and **moves** to the East Gate (**10:18-19**); then outside the city to the mountain east (that is, the Mt. of Olives; **11:22-23**), showing that God is **abandoning his own House-Temple!** It is only when we come to **43:2-5** that we see the Glory returning to the temple.

cherubim → threshold → east gate → mountain

Third, **Chs. 1-3** technically form the **first literary unit of the book**, and it is also chiastic, probably more so than any other section we are looking at.

- A. Setting (exile, Kebar River), visions of God, prophet's call (1:1-3)
- B. Vision of Glory (creatures, wheels, throne), Ezekiel falls facedown (1:4-28)
- C. Empowerment (Spirit enters, Ezekiel stands) (2:1-2)
- D. Mission to rebellious Israel, "Whether they listen..." (2:3-5)
- E. Speak without fear, despite opposition (2:6-7)
- F. Eat scroll (God's word internalized, sweet yet lamentation) (2:8-3:3)**
- E'. Speak without fear, forehead like flint (3:4-9)
- D'. Mission to rebellious Israel, "whether they listen" (3:10-11)
- C'. Empowerment (Spirit lifts, wing's sound) (3:12-14a)
- B'. Vision of glory (wheels' sound, "glory of the Lord") (3:12b-14)
- A'. Setting (Tel Abib, exiles), Ezekiel overwhelmed (3:14b-15)

Fourth, incredibly, the **chapter itself** is loosely chiastic, but delving into this one gets extremely complex for my brain. It is probably better to call it a ring composition as well, as it does not strictly follow a perfect chiasm. Nevertheless, to have so many of these structures woven inside one another like Russian nesting dolls is rather startling and I have no idea how someone would go about doing that.

- A (1:1–3): Visions of God.
- B (1:4): Storm, amber, brightness.
- C (1:5–14): Creatures, wings, metaphors.
- D (1:15–21): **Wheels, Spirit-guided.**
- C' (1:22–25): Firmament, wings' sound.
- B' (1:26–28a): Throne, amber, brightness.
- A' (1:28b): Glory, voice.

The Merkabah Vision of Ezekiel

As we move into the text and try to figure out exactly what is going on in this fantastical vision, perhaps a [simple outline](#) will help us think about what Ezekiel sees.

1. An approaching storm (from the north) (1:4)
2. Four Living Creatures (5-14)
3. Wheels Beside the Creatures (15-21)
4. Firmament and Sound Above (22-25)
5. Throne and Divine Figure like a Man (26-28)

The Approaching Storm (vs. 4)

“As I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north, and a great cloud, with brightness around it, and fire flashing forth continually...” (**Ezek 1:4**), our story begins. On Oct 5, 2017, during a photo op with senior military

leaders and their spouses in the State Dining Room, Trump told reporters the now infamous words, “**Maybe this is the calm before the storm.**” “**What storm, Mr. President?**” “**You’ll find out.**” Have we yet to find out? Trump likely had in mind a political storm, but what kind of a storm is Ezekiel seeing on the horizon?

Notice, the storm comes **from the north**—the direction of evil in the Bible. Everything evil comes from the north: The rebellion of Jeroboam—north; the abominations of the tribe of Dan—north; Mt. Hermon and the watchers—north; Baal’s mountain (the same word as the Hebrew “north” (Tsaphon)—north; nearly all invading armies—north. Maybe this will be a political storm!

And yet, as soon as you compare this language of a storm and great cloud and fire forth flashing to that of other passages in the Bible, it’s completely obvious what he’s about to see. **God** came to **Mt. Sinai** (**Ex 19:16-20**) in a stormy wind, fire and cloud. God came to **Job** (**Job 38:1; 40:6**) out of the whirlwind (or storm), with clouds and lightning implied. The **psalmist** (**Ps 18:6-15**) depicts God’s descending with dark clouds, thunder, lightning, and fire. You getting

the point? Anyone who knows their OT knows that this storm language is the language of an appearance of God.

But suddenly it says, “**and in the midst of the fire, as it were gleaming metal**” (4b). This is the first place ancient alien theorists run to for their UFO. “**See, he saw gleaming metal, a UFO!**” No, he didn’t actually. It says, “*as it were.*” This is the compound word *ke'en*, from the preposition *ki* (like, as) and the noun *‘ayin* (to look). In other words, *it looked like* metal. One popular lexicon says of this word for metal (*hashmal*), the exact etymology is dubious but something like “... **amber and [supposed by] most to be a brilliant amalgam of gold and silver**” (BDB). Amber is actually a tree resin. It’s describing its appearance, not its substance. It isn’t a metal ship at all.

Four Living Creatures (5-9)

We move quickly to **the second thing Ezekiel sees**. “**And from the midst of it came the likeness of four living creatures**” (Ezek 1:5a). “**See,**” the ancient aliens theorist says, “**aliens, E.T., space invaders! The ship has landed and out they come, like something out of Close Encounters of the**

Third Kind.” Perhaps we should keep reading. Always a good idea.

“And this was their appearance: they had a human likeness, but each had four faces, and each of them had four wings” (5b-6). Interesting that I’ve never heard any alien sightings in the UFO world describe any of the creatures they see as having four faces. There’s lots of grey faces or bug-eyed faces or even reptilian faces. But never four faces. Notice, they had a human likeness, so they were *like humans*, but weren’t humans. But they had *four faces*. It wasn’t *like* they had four faces; they *had* four faces.

“Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the sole of a calf’s foot. And they sparkled like burnished bronze” (7). The description is not of a shoe, but of the *sole of a foot*. It wasn’t a human foot, with an arch in the bottom. It was like the hard, flat, concave underside of a bovine’s foot. Keep the idea of *calf’s feet* in mind; we will return to it.

“Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. And the four had their faces and their wings thus: their wings touched one another” (8-9a). This is a vague and yet *bizarre description*. Does it mean they had human hands

on all four sides or just one under the set of wings? Iconography from ancient Babylon actually depicts what we are seeing, and they doubtfully ever show one creature with more than one set of hands ([see pictures below](#)).

Next, it says, “Each one of them went straight forward, without turning as they went” (9b). “See, it’s spinning as it flies,” said of the experts on the TV show. Well now wait. You can’t say that it landed and out came the aliens and then



Figure 3. A four-faced deity



Abb. 131

Othmar Keel, *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestatsschilderungen in Jes, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4* ("Visions of Yahweh and Seal Art: A New Interpretation of the Majestic Portrayals in Isaiah 6, Ezekiel 1 and 10, and Zechariah 4"), Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart, 1984-85. You can access these pictures [here](#).

call the aliens the spaceship! That doesn't work. But more than that, nothing is even "spinning" here.

Since the creatures are connected at the wings and as we will see, they **each face a different direction**, they move together as one, without having to turn to the front. There is no front. It's like **a Borg Cube** fighting the Enterprise. The Enterprise has to turn around and flee. But the cube, since it has no front, just goes any direction it wants without turning. Think of **four cars all welded together** so that each one faces out at a 90-degree angle from the next. There's no front, so they can move forward together in any direction.

Next comes the all-important description. "**As for the likeness of their faces, each had a human face. The four had the face of a lion on the right side, the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and the four had the face of an eagle. Such were their faces**" (10). "**That's clearly talking about a spaceship helmet with four sided representations on it,**" we were told earlier. Nick Redfern is usually a lot more careful about his words than this. This is just plain bizarre, and an obvious case of reading a modern idea into an ancient text. Never a good idea as this is making it say what you want it to mean, not what it actually means and meant to the original audience.

Why these four faces: human, lion, ox, eagle? This will take some unpacking. Here is one of those places where we should go to ch. 10 which describes the exact same scene, but with slightly different language. “And every one had four faces; the first face was the face of *the cherub*, and the second face was a human face, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle” (Ezek 10:14). Three are the same, but the ox is replaced by the cherub. A cherub is a guardian angel. Not a personal guardian, but like those who guarded, for example, the gate of Eden (Gen 3:24). They are usually depicted as guarding a throne, in the same way that the winged Uraei (flying cobras) and lions on the arms of King Tut’s throne guarded the Pharaoh in the iconography. So why the change?



Tut’s Throne with Calf Legs and Flying Serpent Arms

In Babylon, where Ezekiel is, they had something called a **Lamassu**. You've probably seen them in the news, as in 2014 ISIS terrorists destroyed many of them in the ancient city of Nimrud (see **pics next page**). These are heavenly guardian beings that they made huge stone carvings of to protect temples and throne rooms. These Lamassu had the faces of **men**, wings of **eagles**, and the bodies of either **lions** or **bulls**. *The same four creatures*. This is no coincidence. Why? To understand, we need to know that that greatest astronomers in the ancient world were the Babylonians. In fact, Daniel, the contemporary of Ezekiel, became their chief (**Dan 5:11**) for a time! In their astronomy and astrology, they called what we today call **Leo** the "**Lion**" (*UR.GU.LA*). They called **Taurus** the "**Heavenly Bull**" (*GU₄.AN.NA*). They called **Aquarius** the "Great One" or "**Fish-Man**" (*GÚ.LA* or *KU₆*), and they called **Scorpio** the "**Scorpion**" (*GIR.TAB*).⁸ Yes, this comes to us **from Babylon**, not Greece!

⁸ **Going Deeper:** A couple of you will appreciate this nerdy footnote that I had A.I. write, as I had no idea about any of this myself. *Cuneiform* (wedge-shaped writing) *transliterations* (converting ancient signs to modern letters) like *GU₄.AN.NA* ("Heavenly Bull," Taurus, pronounced **AL-poo SHA-moo** in Akkadian) use dots to separate signs (e.g., *GU₄* = bull *logogram* [a sign for a whole word], *AN* = sky) and subscript numbers (e.g., ₄, ₆) to distinguish *homophonous* (same-sounding) signs (e.g., *GU₄* vs. *GU*); pronounce as Akkadian words (e.g., *nēšu* [NAY-shoo] for *UR.GU.LA* [Leo], *zuqaqīpu* [zoo-ka-KEE-poo] for *GIR.TAB* [Scorpio], *rabû* [ra-BOO] for *GÚ.LA* [Aquarius]), ignoring subscripts, with dots guiding syllable breaks in Sumerian readings



Cast from the original in Iraq, this is one of a pair of five-legged *lamassu* with lion's feet in Berlin; *Wikipedia*.



Human-headed winged bull *lamassu* from Sargon II's palace in Dur-Sharrukin, modern Khorsabad (Louvre); *Wikipedia*.

These are the **Fixed Constellations**, because they arise in the middle of all four seasons, offering a kind of guardianship over time and space in the way God designed the to be for “**signs and seasons**” (**Gen 1:14**). So there is a parallel between the visible heavens and the invisible, supernatural

(e.g., *goo-an-na*). See MUL.APIN for constellation names; dots show cuneiform sign boundaries, and subscripts (per Labat’s *Manuel d’Épigraphie Akkadienne*) clarify variant signs, silent in ancient speech.

realm. This is a deliberate creation of God to give us object lessons that teach us about invisible realities.

But here, the obvious question about [the eagle vs. the scorpion](#) arises. If it is really that close an analogue, why the difference? There are a couple of possible answers, which take us to the next verse. “[And their wings were spread out above. Each creature had two wings, each of which touched the wing of another, while two covered their bodies](#)” ([Ezek 1:11](#)). So they have [four wings](#). One set is connected to the next creature on either side, while they cover their bodies with the other set. Wings are associated not only with birds, but their heavenly counterparts: [flying angelic creatures](#) such as [seraphim or cherubim](#).⁹ While Scorpio was always a scorpion, Babylon did associate some stars *in* Scorpio’s “claws” (part of Libra in Greek astronomy) with [birds](#),¹⁰ and the nearby constellation [Aquila is an eagle](#). It is likely then

⁹ It is worth noting that John sees four living creatures as well, but says they have six wings. This is the same as Isaiah who sees creatures with six wings. In Isaiah, they are called seraphim (from seraph—“to burn”). Their function is to guard holiness and to cleanse Isaiah with the burning coals. They focus on worship and purification. As serpentine creatures, they also depict danger. On the other hand, cherubim comes from an Akkadian word *karābu*, meaning to protect or bless. They focus on stability and divine presence. They are more like the king’s brute squad. We do not have enough data to know if they are two distinct types of heavenly beings or if this is a function that could be shared by multiple kinds of beings or even one being, though I tend to think that more than one being is involved here.

¹⁰ Mitannian seals (ca. 1500 BC) show scorpions with winged elements.

that both the Babylonians and Ezkiel depicted the eagle because it better suits the iconography of *heavenly* supernatural flying guardians. In fact, in Ezekiel 10, he simply calls the Living Creatures—Cherubim (**Ezek 10:20**), which are throne guardians. A Scorpion is associated with earth and death (and the goddess Ishhara, not good to a priest of Yahweh!) and that just isn't suitable to convey the theological message.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Ezekiel 1:10 | Human | Lion | Ox | Eagle |
| Ezekiel 10:14 | Cherub | Human | Lion | Eagle |

Summing up, we somehow have **a connection** here between the living creatures that Ezekiel sees and the fixed heavenly constellations of the night sky.¹¹ I think that relationship is one of **a mirror**. God made the visible heavens to be an observable mirror of what things are like in the invisible realm. This will have more importance as we continue, before we finally move to understanding the fullness of what Ezekiel is seeing.

“And each went straight forward. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, without turning as they went” (12).

¹¹ A New resource, at least to me, on this that has some good notes to follow is **Tim Hegedus**, *Early Christianity and Ancient Astrology*, Patristic Studies 6, ed. Gerald Bray (New York, Peter Lang, 2007), 231-34.

This tells you that *they are moving*, notice, it is *creatures* that are moving, *not a spaceship* but living creatures. The only living creature spaceship I know about is the one that went into a black hole in *Event Horizon* and came back as a sentient evil living ship that killed its crew. And that's a horror movie. It also isn't real! Even more important, they are *not being propelled around by an engine and steering wheel*, or by some kind of *flammable fuel* that lights up. They follow the "spirit;" wherever it (or he) goes, they follow. The Spirit here seems to be an external source that they follow. And they move, any direction they need, of their own will without any effort whatsoever.

We complete the description of the Creatures in **vv. 13-14**. "As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches moving to and fro among the living creatures. And the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning. And the living creatures darted to and fro, like the appearance of a flash of lightning." Notice, it is *the creatures that are like coals of fire*, not a spaceship. It must have been a terrifying experience, one to equal the terrifying message he will be given in the coming chapters!

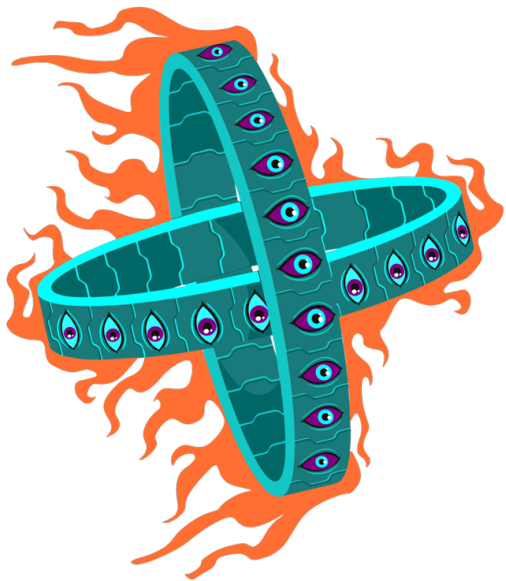
Wheels Beside the Creatures (15-21)

Vv. 15-21 now begin to describe something new. And this is where the ancient alien crowd really starts seeing things that aren't there. “Now as I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the earth beside the living creatures, one for each of the four of them” (**Ezek 1:15**). So, four living creatures, each with four heads now appear next to four wheels. That's strange.

If you are an ancient aliens theorist, you will likely say that these four wheels are four UFOs and that the living creatures each had their own spaceship to come down and talk to or abduct Ezekiel. But let's keep reading. “As for the appearance of the wheels and their construction: their appearance was like the gleaming of beryl” (**16a**). Beryl is a mineral, not a metal. In its pure form, it is colorless, but it can be blue, green, just about anything depending on the trace minerals in it. The point is that it was gleaming and brilliant looking, like an LED lit crystal. Maybe I shouldn't have said that, because an ancient aliens person might misquote this as describing the windows or the lights of the spacecraft!

“And the four had the same likeness, their appearance and construction being as it were a wheel within a wheel”

(16b). This is bizarre imagery, but what might it have looked like? Is it talking about high alien tech that Ezekiel was seeing from another planet? Or is something else going on here? Some art depicts is much like a gyroscope a spinning device with nested, rotating rings that maintain stability and allow multidirectional movement. That's possible, I suppose, but **we've been discussing stars**. Curiously, if you point a camera at the north pole and then expose an image all night, you end up with “**wheels within wheels**” that come to a fix point at the north star. I think that's more what is being depicted.



An artist's interpretation of an ophan. [Paladium](#), Wikipedia.

All the stars in the night sky appear to circle the celestial pole (the south pole in this photo). Over a period of several hours, this apparent motion leaves star trails. [A. Duro/ESO](#), Wikipedia.



As before, “When they went, they went in any of their four directions without turning as they went” (17). Notice here that the wheels are all moving together, just like the Living Creatures, which remember are all attached to one another at the wings, not in four different places.

“And their rims were tall and awesome, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around” (18). The von Däniken and Tsoukalos crowd argue that this is seemingly inexplicable technology that held Ezekiel spellbound. But John the Apostle gives us a better clue. When speaking about the Lamb that was standing as though it had been slain, he says it had “seven eyes, which are the seven *spirits* of God sent out into all the earth” (Rev 5:7). So eyes are akin to spirits.

Now, as we learn Hebrews and Psalms, God “makes his *angels spirits*” (*pneumata*) (and a flaming fire; Heb 1:7; Ps 104:4). But angels are likened to the stars in the Bible (cf. Job 38:7). In fact, in this very chapter, one Hebrew word is being translated in two different ways. The word for eyes is ‘*ayin*. That’s one of the easy ones to remember. However, this same word is translated in vs. 4 and 16 as “sparkling” or “gleaming.” What do stars do? Remember your nursery rhyme: “Twinkle, twinkle, little star...” Thus, in the visible heavens, these eyes are represented by the rest of the stars

that make up the wheel as it spins.¹² In the invisible realm, it mirrors the God who sees all things.

Imagine looking up into the night sky in a kind of vision where time had collapsed and you were able to see the wheel in the sky turning all at once. “Tall” and “awesome” rims are a perfect way to represent the majestic sweep of the night sky. How much more whatever these wheels are *and are holding* in the invisible realm?

But just what might that be? We are almost ready to see it. First, let’s finish vv. 19-21. “And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose” (19). This is now familiar language. They move together. “Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” (20). Somehow, the spirit or will of the living creatures drove the wheels. “When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those rose from the earth, the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels” (21). This scene of wheels within wheels, represented by the ever revolving night sky and the always at guard fixed constellations is moving around Ezekiel on the ground and in the air. It is

¹² For example, Heiser, “Ezekiel’s Vision, Part 2.”

almost too fantastical to imagine what he was seeing, which is probably why ancient aliens people say what they say. They are trying to make sense of what to us is inexplicable.

Firmament and Sound Above (22-25)

We begin to get at how the ancients would have understood exactly what was being described, even though to us we are completely unfamiliar with it, especially if we don't know those more “boring” parts of the OT. What do I mean? Let's keep reading. The fourth of five points of our simple outline of what Ezekiel sees is vv. 22-25. “Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads.” As Ezekiel's gaze moves upward, he sees this incredible sight. To the ancient aliens crowd, this sounds like the gleaming hull of a spaceship, a high-tech canopy for extraterrestrial pilots. But let's look closer. The Hebrew word for expanse, *raqia*, is the same as the “firmament” in Genesis 1—the dome of the sky where God set the stars. Picture the night sky over Babylon, twinkling like crystal, with stars hammered into place like jewels in a vault, as Job in the same text that talks about angels as stars says, “hard as a molten mirror” (Job 37:18). This isn't literal, obviously. It is a metaphor that is actually teaching you something *theological*.

This expanse isn't about aliens landing in Babylon. It's a vision of God's cosmic order, the canvas of God's omnipresent glory, a hint that **His presence is bigger than any temple**, reaching the exiles by the Chebar canal. This is a tremendously important thought, and one that we will come back to at the end. Ezekiel's vision is inviting you to lift your eyes to the God whose glory shines through the heavens.

“And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings” (23-24). This is a goosebump, hair-raising, **spine tingling moment in the vision**. It marks a sudden shift. Unexpectedly, as they begin to move, the displaced air created by their massive wings begins to sound like a colossal waterfall. It was likely so loud that Ezekiel couldn't have heard himself talk.

But the metaphor changes abruptly. It isn't just waters. It is **like the sound of the Almighty himself**. Somehow, God's voice is in the air, and it is louder than the loudest concert, bolder than a parent's rebuke of a child, and authoritative like that of a General commanding an army. For it was, indeed, **“like the sound of an army.”** This is **not a UFO**

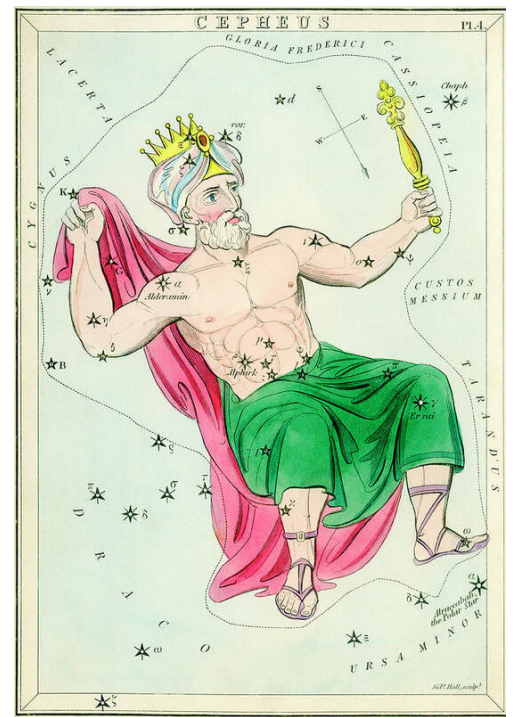
come to abduct poor, unsuspecting Ezekiel. This is the LORD of Hosts, the Lord of the heavenly armies, coming with his legions to the prophet.

Suddenly, they stop. All is still. There's a kind of hush, all over the world. The *sound of silence*. At that moment, "There came a voice from above the expanse over their heads." For dramatic effect, the prophet repeats, "When they stood still, they let down their wings" (25). It reminds me of something like the armies of Mao, so disciplined, so perfectly aligned in marching order as they are paraded before the people and suddenly, they stop. Scenes of ten thousand storm troopers in Star Wars or the host of orcs at Isengard, when Gríma Wormtongue exasperatingly exclaims to Saruman, "My lord, there is no such force," only to suddenly gaze over the edge of the tower to the sounds of blasting horns and perfectly aligned field army of orcs below awaiting the command of the wizard. Wormtongue starts to cry.

Throne and Divine Figure Like a Man (26-28)

And then the vision reaches its climax. "And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance" (26). I

want you to imagine Ezekiel gazing into the vault of heaven at night. In the far north, where the storm came from (v. 4), he would see Cepheus, the constellation of a king on a throne, with the stars circling around the pole like wheels within wheels. Below, the four fixed constellations—Leo the lion, Taurus the bull, Aquarius the man, and the eagle near Scorpio—stand like sentinels, guarding *the throne of Cepheus*, which they perfectly encircle. These starry guardians mirror the four living creatures, with their faces of lion, ox, human, and eagle, moving as one under the expanse. The Babylonians saw these as cosmic protectors, but Ezekiel sees more: a visible mirror of the invisible realm, where God's cherubim uphold *His throne*.



(Left) The Four Cardinal Constellations of the Zodiac Surrounding Cepheus on His Throne Stellarium Software (with Ursa Minor as a Mountain Range, Scorpio as an Eagle). Cepheus on right.

That idea of Cepheus the constellation as an analogy of what he could have seen ... at first, is not far off. But suddenly, the seer's gaze beholds the likeness of a different throne, shining like sapphire—brilliant, fiery, and translucent. But wait. **A throne?** I thought Ezekiel was seeing a UFO? Nobody calls even the main seat of a spaceship a throne. Captain Kirk's seat was the helm—the captain's chair. These seats are “pilot's consoles” or “conns,” not thrones. **Thrones are what *kings* sit on.** And they sit on them in their palaces and temples.

Remember how I told you to keep the large chiasm of the book in mind—how Ezekiel ends and therefore begins in the temple? You are now ready to understand why. At just this point, I want to return to some of the imagery we've been looking at from a biblical perspective. If only ancient alien theorists cared to look at the rest of the Bible! The whole vision is stock language for a royal chariot throne, straight out of the Bible's **temple imagery**. Heiser, who called UFO talk in this chapter “paleobabble,” shows us how every piece of this vision **mirrors Solomon's temple in Jerusalem**. Let's retrace our steps, quick and clear, to see what Ezekiel's really describing.

- **Storm and Fire (v. 4):** Ezekiel saw a stormy wind, a great cloud, and fire flashing forth. This isn't rocket exhaust, and it isn't a political storm. It is **God's storm theophany**, like at Sinai (**Ex 19:16-20**), marking that he has come. In the temple, God's presence was marked by a cloud and fire (**1Kgs 8:10-11**), filling the holy place when Solomon dedicated it. **This is God showing up**, not a spaceship blasting off.

Four Living Creatures (vv. 5-14): These cherubim, with human-lion-ox-eagle faces, four wings, and bovine feet, aren't aliens in spacesuits. They're **throne guardians**, just like the heavenly analogue of the fixed constellations, and just like the four cherubim in Solomon's temple. **Four cherubim?** Yes. Two giant cherubim stood in the Holy of Holies, their wings touching wall to wall (**1Kgs 6:23-28**), and *two more* were on the Ark of the Covenant's lid (**Ex 25:18-20**). They were carved as lions, oxen, and cherubim decorated temple panels (**1Kgs 7:29**). Amazingly, the **Ark of the Covenant** isn't just a box. It is actually **a divine throne**, the throne that God who sits enthroned above the cherubim (**Ps 99:1, 5**). And who sits there? The Angel-man (**Ex 15:3**) who spoke face to face with Moses (**Num 12:8** NIV). When you come to realize that there are analogues in the ANE with things called **divine**

chariots and that depict four wheels with calf legs (Remember we saw that the legs of the living creatures were calf legs and feet?) and winged creatures at the four corners whose wings all touch each other, and that these platforms carried the king, then you start to get the picture of what was going on when God made poles of acacia wood to carry the Ark and why it was that God was so upset when they were carrying it on an oxen cart and Uzzah touched it and died. This was the king's throne and they were treating it like a beat-up pickup truck hauling scrap to the junkyard. Ezekiel's saw heavenly cherubim, not E.T. In Ezekiel's vision, the wheels and creatures are attached and moving at once because they are a God's chariot-throne made up of the creatures who then carry God effectively on their backs.

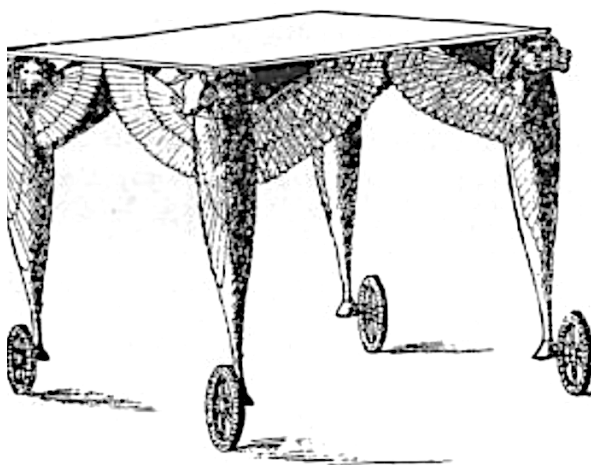


Abb. 107



Abb. 12

Deities being transported on Wheeled platforms / chariots which could also fly.

Pictures in Keel; copied from Heiser, "Notes on Ezekiel's Vision."

- **Wheels Within Wheels (vv. 15-21):** Those “wheel within a wheel” things, gleaming like beryl with eyes on their rims, aren’t UFO landing gear. The temple had ten bronze stands for basins, each with four wheels, axles, and panels carved with cherubim, lions, and oxen (1 Kings 7:27-33). These wheels were like chariot wheels, part of the temple’s mobile furnishings. The “eyes” echo the temple’s all-seeing God, like the “seven eyes” of the Lamb in Revelation 5:6. Ezekiel’s wheels move with the cherubim, powered by the Spirit, not spaceship fuel.
- **Expanse Like Crystal (v. 22):** The shining expanse above the cherubim isn’t a UFO’s hull. The expanse mirrors the firmament in Genesis 1:6, a starry vault where God’s glory shines. But the temple reflected this in its cosmic ceiling, like the “sea of cast metal” in the temple courtyard—a huge basin on twelve oxen, symbolizing the heavens (1Kgs 7:23-25). In the temple, this was the boundary between God’s presence and the world below.
- **Throne Like Sapphire (v. 26):** Finally, the sapphire throne isn’t Captain Kirk’s helm—it’s God’s seat, symbolized in the ark’s lid with the two cherubim. In Solomon’s temple, the

Ark was God's footstool under the cherubim's wings (1Ch 28:2), but the whole setup was called a "golden chariot of the cherubim" (1Chr 28:18). That's the Hebrew word *Merkabah*—a throne-chariot, the same word used to for thousands of years by the Jews to describe Ezekiel's vision. The sapphire echoes Exodus 24:10, where Moses saw God's throne like sapphire on Sinai. This is a king's mobile throne, not a pilot's console. The temple/tabernacle were to be carefully created exactly as God directed because they are reflecting the invisible realm.

Every Jew in Babylon would've known this from their Scripture, their temple, and Babylonian throne art. Just because *we aren't familiar* enough with the rest of the Bible, it doesn't give us permission to run with ancient alien UFO theories. It is we moderns who have the problem, not the ancients. Rather, this is one of the greatest most fantastical visions of God's glory, ruling over all creation.

This takes us to the last two verses. And they are truly incredible. Remember, we have just seen that the one seated on the throne had the likeness of a human appearance. Now, "Upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance

of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of *the glory* of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking” (Ezek 1:27-28). It is the King who is gleaming, not a UFO. And he has the appearance of a man, not a space-alien. And his appearance is one of great glory.

Who is this King of Glory? This is the King of the universe, shining on His throne-chariot. But can we be more specific? Yes! Praise Jesus. Who is this King of Glory? What Ezekiel calls “*the glory of the Lord*” (v. 28), a human-like form radiating fire and rainbow light, or as Heiser puts it, “*God in human form,*” is the same glory Moses saw on Sinai (Ex 24:10) and later in the cloud at the tabernacle (Ex 33:18-23). Who is this King of Glory? *It is the pre-incarnate Christ.* But we, on this side of the incarnation know that we have seen the Glory of God in the Face of Christ. “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father*” (John 1:1, 14). In Reve 1:13-16, John

sees Jesus, “one like a son of man,” with a face like the sun, eyes of fire, and a voice like many waters, borrowing images straight from Ezekiel’s fiery, radiant figure. This is Jesus, the eternal Son, ruling from the throne before He ever walked in Galilee.

Why does this matter? The exiles in Babylon felt abandoned, a thousand miles from Jerusalem’s temple, thinking God was stuck back in Judah. As Boney M, taking their cue from Psalm 137 lamented, “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat Down. Yeah, we wept. When we remembered Zion.” But this vision screams: God is not tied to a building! He never has been. “What is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa 66:1).

Suddenly, God’s throne-chariot rolls into Babylon. Think of it! The center of all politics on earth. The greatest empire in the world. Nebuchadnezzar: “King of kings” (Ezek 26:7; Dan 2:37). But here in this vision, God is showing that he is King over every corner of the earth, from Zion to the Chebar canal. Unlike Babylonian gods like Marduk, stuck in their temples and in their idols, unable to move around, only Christ, the true God, reigns everywhere, unbound. Heiser nails it: “God is still in control,” no matter

where you are or how bad it gets.¹³ For the exiles, this was hope—Their God sees them, knows their pain, and rules over their future. For Christians, we know their God is our Messiah—the Lord Jesus.

As I asked at the beginning of last week's sermon, life can feel like exile—loss, fear, chaos. Especially in times like we are living in post-2020. Many have suffered. More is on the way. Many doubt and despair and do not know where to turn. But **Christ, the radiant King on the throne, is with you**, not locked in a temple or a church or a city or a nation. Look to him through this vision and believe. He's sovereign over every storm, every nation, every moment.

Ancient alien theorists think they have a great story. It is drivel compared to the real story. No UFO could ever compare to the glory of Jesus, who left this throne to die for you and rose to reign forever. Lift your eyes to Him, the true Lord of Hosts whom Ezekiel saw by the Chebar River, in Babylon.

Appendix: UFOs and the Bible

¹³ Heiser, *Naked Bible* 112.

Given the foil of ancient aliens theorists in this sermon and my lack of prior pulpit engagement with this topic, I offer a brief reflection on UFOs and the Bible from a Christian perspective. Zecharia Sitchin, whom Dr. Michael Heiser critiqued extensively on his *Sitchin Is Wrong* website, writes,

Jacob's vision [the "ladder" of Gen 28] is not the only biblical tale of flying craft coming from and disappearing into the skies. There is the story of the fiery chariot that carried the Prophet Elijah to heaven, and the story of the flying machine that the Prophet Ezekiel had seen. Such stories illustrate the point that I wish to impress upon you: If you believe in the Bible, you must accept the possibility of UFOs.¹⁴

Sitchin's claim is what Heiser calls "paleobabble"—speculative misinterpretations of ancient texts lacking scholarly rigor. Jacob's *sullam* (Gen 28:12) is not a UFO but a ziggurat, a stationary stepped structure common in Mesopotamia.¹⁵ But what about something like Elijah's chariots that took him to heaven or even in some sense Ezekiel's chariots and creatures that came to him, as discussed in the sermon? I want to deliberately use language that might make you uneasy here, but I'll clarify it as we go along.

¹⁴ **Zecharia Sitchin**, *The Anunnaki Chronicles: A Zecharia Sitchin Reader*, ed. Janet Sitchin (Rochester, VT: Bear & Company, 2015).

¹⁵ See **John Walton**, "[The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications](#)," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 155-75, esp. 161 and n. 20.

On one level, given that they are not from this world, and that they came down from heaven, we might be justified in calling them “alien.” *Alien* means “not from here.” They were not made by us. The word fits in some sense. Second, especially in Elijah’s case, they came from somewhere “up there” and took him away, flying upwards into the sky where he vanished. Given that they are flying vehicles that vanish in the heavens, we could even call them “spacecraft,” though heavenly chariots is a more accurate explanation.

The biblical descriptions bear zero resemblance to the modern UFO phenomenon of flying discs or cigar shaped craft or balls of light, all well documented in the literature. The biblical stories claim that these things come from beings that reside in the invisible realm, not in outer space in the visible heavens. In other words, they reside in a place you can’t look to with even an infinitely powerful telescope. There are ways the ancient aliens crowd could overcome this, for example by positing that their aliens are actually interdimensional beings or something like that, and some do; but this is not typical way they think about aliens.

We can see that this creates a bit of a tension. On one hand, you have creatures that can be called aliens in some sense with crafts that don’t come from here. On the other, they do not properly reside in our space-time continuum, to use sci-fi language. Let’s consider how Christians have approached this tension, acknowledging their cultural significance while grounding our response in biblical theology.

The modern UFO phenomenon, now often termed Unidentified Aerial Phenomena (UAP), has gained credibility through documented cases, such as the [2021 Pentagon UAP Task Force report](#)—which analyzed 144 incidents, some involving objects defying known technology (Office of the Director of National Intelligence, *Preliminary Assessment: Unidentified Aerial Phenomena*, Washington, DC, 2021) or the [UFO Hearing held by Congress in 2023](#). How should Christians respond to this evidence? Three approaches have emerged:

1. **Dismissal as Fiction:** Many Christians ignore or reject UFOs outright, labeling them baseless or questioning the faith of those who entertain the topic. This approach is misguided. The reality of UAPs is supported by substantial evidence, including military testimonies and congressional hearings. Dismissing them ignores a phenomenon impacting millions and stifles meaningful dialogue.
2. **Demonic Origins:** Some Christians, like the authors of *Lights in the Sky & Little Green Men*,¹⁶ classify a small subset of UFOs—termed Residual UFOs (RUFOs)—as non-physical but real phenomena originating from demonic forces. This at least gives it some credibility as a real occurrence. They propose an Inter-dimensional Hypothesis (IDH), suggesting these entities manifest from a spiritual realm, not outer space. Michael Heiser, best known as a biblical scholar, but who few realize was actually named by FATE Magazine as one of the 100

¹⁶ See [Hugh Ross](#), Kenneth Samples, and Mark Clark, *Lights in the Sky & Little Green Men: A Rational Christian Look at UFOs and Extraterrestrials* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2002).

most influential people in Ufology in 2005,¹⁷ reviewed this book and agreed with 95% of their conclusions,¹⁸ while also suggesting in various places that some physical UFOs might stem from advanced human technology, possibly inspired by demonic forces.

3. **Physical and Spiritual Hybrid:** A third view, held by Christians like Timothy Alberino¹⁹ and UFO researcher Richard Dolan,²⁰ acknowledges both physical and spiritual dimensions. They argue that UFOs include tangible craft and beings, as evidenced by firsthand accounts like Bob Lazar's 1989 claims of working on non-human craft in New Mexico.²¹ While some RUFOs may have demonic influence, not all can be reduced to spiritual phenomena. Dolan, a non-believer, views the phenomenon as potentially nefarious, challenging secular ufology optimism about benevolent aliens who've come to usher in a New Age.

I lean toward the third view, affirming that some UFOs may involve physical, extraterrestrial craft while recognizing a demonic component in certain RUFOs, as Alberino suggests. This stance avoids reducing all UFOs to demons while taking their physical reality seriously. Theologically, this poses no challenge to orthodoxy.

¹⁷ "[The 100 Most Influential People in Ufology Today](#)," *FATE Magazine* (2005 UFO Special).

¹⁸ [Michael S. Heiser](#), "[Lights in the Sky & Little Green Men: A Rational Christian Look at UFOs and Extraterrestrials](#), by Hugh Ross, Kenneth Samples, and Mark Clark (NavPress, 192 pp. plus notes," *facadethe book.com* (July 9, 2007).

¹⁹ Alberino has spoken about this ad nauseum on the Blurry Creatures podcast. But see also his book, [Timothy Alberino](#), *Birthright: The coming Posthuman Apocalypse and the Usurpation of Adam's Dominion on Planet Earth* (2020).

²⁰ Dolan also talks about this ad nauseum. You can check out his website at [richarddolanmembers.com](#). Or see for example his UFOs and the national Security State book series (at two volumes as of right now).

²¹ [Joe Rogan](#), "[Bob Lazar & Jeremy Corbell, ep #1315](#)," *Joe Rogan Experience* (Jun 20, 2019).

But how could a Christian believe that there is other intelligent life in the universe besides man? This seems to be the main objection that Christians have to this view, along with somehow thinking that this necessitates something about Jesus dying for aliens. To the latter point, Christians believe in angels, but don't believe Jesus "died for angels." God may have elected some of them (1Tim 5:21), sure, but Jesus didn't die for them at Calvary (Heb 2:16). So why should he be obligated to die for any other alien race? The whole point of his First Coming is that it was of grace alone, totally undeserved, unmerited by us and of the free mercy of God alone because he loves humans. He is not obligated to do that for anyone, mankind included, so this objection fails rather spectacularly.

As to the other point, again, Christians believe there are such things as angels. They are real, they may reside naturally in the unseen realm—call it whatever you like: heaven, another dimension, whatever. But they still exist *and* they interact with humans "over here." And they do so physically, contrary to popular apologists such as Hank Hanegraaff who deny their physical reality.²² Angels can have their feet washed, eat food (Gen 18:4-8), grab people to bring them inside a house (Gen 19:10) after others want to "know them" (5), wrestle with men (32:24), and so on. Therefore, we already believe in physical aliens from somewhere else, since angels

²² **Hank Hanegraaff**, "[Did Demons Have Sexual Relations with Women in Genesis 6:4](#)," *The Bible Answer Book* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2004), Q. 27. Hanegraaff was deeply confused on many levels in this short answer, conflating angels with demons is only the first of many blunders, but nevertheless, in doing so he clearly teaches that angels are not physical beings.

are not from here! But more to the point, the Bible constantly refers to the “host of heaven.” “Heaven” need not be limited to the invisible realm, logically speaking. The universe is vast. Why couldn’t God create physical life in other parts of this unfathomably large creation? Maybe a better question is, why *wouldn’t* he?

Someone might object, “But man is special!” Sure, man is special. So what? Man is special and God still created millions of animals for us to live with. There’s nothing I can see theologically speaking that prevents my belief in physical aliens from other parts of our universe that aren’t special as man is special. Now, how they might get here? That’s another question that I won’t pretend to resolve here.

“But man alone is made in the image of God!” This objection seems to be rooted in what I think is only a partially correct notion of what the image of God is: higher intelligence, when biblically speaking in Genesis 1:26, the image includes dominion of planet earth. And honestly, we alone *were* given that dominion—not even Satan had it. Maybe somewhere else he did, but not on earth. But I need to point out here, that many Christians have believed that angels themselves are also made in the image of God. Aquinas said, “The image of God is more perfect in the angels than in man, because their intellectual nature is more perfect” ([*Summa Theologica* 1.93.3](#)). The Puritan William Perkins said, “The inhabitants of the

world are reasonable creatures made according to God's own image. They are either Angels, or men" (Perkins, [*The Order of Salvation and Damnation*](#), Ch. 7).²³

Sitchin's ancient aliens claims misread biblical visions like Ezekiel's as UFOs, but a Christian can affirm the possibility of extra-terrestrial life without endorsing paleobabble. Angels, as physical beings from the unseen realm, are already "aliens" in a biblical sense, and a vast universe could host other intelligent life without contradicting Scripture. While some RUFOs may reflect demonic activity, others may involve physical craft, as evidenced by credible reports. Ezekiel's vision points to Christ's glory, not UFOs, but Christians can engage the UFO phenomenon thoughtfully, trusting in the God who rules over all creation, seen and unseen.

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²³ Thanks to my cohort in arms Jon Moffitt for these great finds.

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