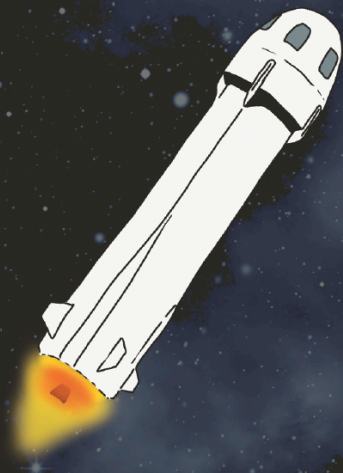


CONTEXT MATTERS, BECAUSE TRYING TO READ
UFOS DIRECTLY INTO THE BIBLE HAS HAD SOME
TERRIBLE REAL-WORLD CONSEQUENCES.

FOR ERICH VON DANIKEN, AUTHOR OF 1968'S CHARIOTS OF THE GODS?, THIS KIND OF SELECTIVE
READING WAS A WAY TO GENERATE CONTROVERSY, SELL SOME BOOKS, AND KICK-START A POP
CULTURE 'ANCIENT ASTRONAUT' FAD. BUT FOR THE HEAVEN'S GATE CULT OF THE 1970S-1990S,
OBSESSION WITH READING UFOS INTO BIBLICAL TEXTS (INCLUDING EZEKIEL) TOOK A MUCH
DARKER TURN. THE MEMBERS OF HEAVEN'S GATE BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE MESSAGE OF
THE BIBLE WAS PRIMARILY ABOUT ESCAPING THIS WORLD VIA A SPACECRAFT WHICH WOULD ONE
DAY TAKE THE FAITHFUL AWAY TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. WHEN THEY EVENTUALLY GAVE UP ON
'WAITING FOR A PHYSICAL UFO TO COME GET THEM, THEY DECIDED INSTEAD TO 'SEND THEIR
SPIRITS INTO A PASSING SPACECRAFT' BY MEANS OF MASS SUICIDE IN 1997.



FLYING SAUCERS AND ANCIENT ASTRONAUTS
ARE A MODERN WAY OF READING A DIFFERENT
KIND OF STORY INTO THE BIBLE—A STORY
WHICH ASSUMES THAT THE TRUTH OF GOD
(ALONG WITH MEANING, HOPE AND PURPOSE)
WILL BE FOUND 'OUT THERE', FAR FROM THIS
WORLD. IT MISSES THE BIBLE'S TRUE FOCUS
ON HOW HUMAN BEINGS CAN COME TO KNOW
GOD HERE AND NOW.



GOD IS NOT WAITING TO BEAM US
UP SO WE CAN ABANDON PLANET
EARTH—GOD INSTEAD CALLS UPON
EARTHLINGS TO LIVE WISELY IN
THE WORLD WE'VE BEEN GIVEN.
THE BIBLICAL GOD ASKS
HUMANITY TO BE GOOD STEWARDS
OF OUR COSMIC HOME (GEN 2:15),
NOT TO PLAN AN ESCAPE FROM IT.

YET GOD IS NOT THE ONLY COSMIC POWER IN THE
BIBLE OFFERING HUMANS A MODEL FOR HOW TO
LIVE. AND UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OTHER POWERS
DO NOT COME IN PEACE....

PART 2 ALIEN GODS

IN THE 10 COMMANDMENTS,
THE BIBLICAL GOD SAYS THIS...

"You shall have no other
gods before me."
--Exodus 20:3

WHY? I MEAN, IF JUDAISM AND
CHRISTIANITY ONLY BELIEVE
THERE'S ONE GOD, WHY WOULD
YOU NEED TO SPECIFY HOW TO
PRIORITIZE VARIOUS GODS?

IF YOU GO BACK TO OLDER
ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS, THAT
SAME VERSE FROM THE 10
COMMANDMENTS IS SOMETIMES
RENDERED A LITTLE DIFFERENT...
"YOU SHALL HAVE NO ALIEN GODS
BEFORE ME."

THIS ARCHAIC LANGUAGE BEGINS TO
HINT AT SOMETHING IMPORTANT: THE
'OTHER GODS' WHICH THE BIBLE
WARNS AGAINST ARE UNDERSTOOD AS
FUNDAMENTALLY UNLIKE THE GOD OF
ISRAEL. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT
THEM WHICH IS WHOLLY DIFFERENT IN
SUBSTANCE...THESE ARE ALIEN GODS.