

How Should Christians Respond to US Government's Release of Preliminary Report on UFOs?

On June 25, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence released a preliminary report of recently declassified information it has collected on UFOs. The report focuses on reports of "unidentified aerial phenomena" that occurred between 2004 and 2021.

So what does the report conclude? (Drum roll, please.) The short answer: The ODNI doesn't know. The long answer: Here goes.

The report says, "Our analysis of the data supports the construct that if and when individual UAP incidents are resolved they will fall into one of five potential explanatory categories: (1) airborne clutter, (2) natural atmospheric phenomena, (3) USG or industry developmental programs, (4) foreign adversary systems, and (5) a catchall "other" bin."

After reading through the report, I would say that if these five categories were slices of a pie, 90% of the pie would be one gargantuan slice for the "catchall 'other' bin," while four tiny slivers would represent the other four categories.

So how should we, the Christian community, feel about this awkward topic? We're good at spouting off chapter and verse on topics like abortion, same-sex marriage and others. However, the Bible does not directly address UFOs. Yes, you could talk about Zechariah's vision of the flying scroll (Zech. 5:1-4), which was larger than an average school bus, or Ezekiel's wheels, "a wheel in the middle of a wheel" that were "lifted up" (Ezek. 1:16b-21). These may have initially been UFOs to Zechariah and Ezekiel, although Scripture records that God later explained the flying scroll to Zechariah. But I think

it's a stretch to relate them to the current discussion, since those events involved God speaking to these two individuals through visions.

Are these sightings real or imagined? And if real, what are they? I live near Stephenville, Texas, where I've lived most of my life. You may remember back in 2008, Stephenville became "the new Roswell." There were numerous UFO "sightings," drawing national attention, and there were Stephenville residents that appeared on top-ranked programs like *Larry King Live*. One of the individuals who went public with what he saw was a friend of mine, whom I've known since high school, and he's even done a house renovation project for me. He's not the kind of guy who would seek attention, and I absolutely believe he saw something. There were other residents, with whom I had common friends, who said they were also credible witnesses. I actually saw a UFO hovering myself while driving into Stephenville one night, although it was several years later than the 2008 sightings. Moreover, we have all seen the videos of some of these occurrences that seem to have been taken by reliable sources, some even by our military.

To answer the first question, I believe they are real in the sense that they really are visible. Some would say, "Visible? They've even found physical debris in Roswell!"

Maybe so. But let us not forget that in one of the most bizarre stories in the Bible, demonic spirits mated with physical women and produced the giants, or Nephilim (Gen. 6:1-4). So, even though that's far-fetched to our way of thinking, there's scriptural underpinning to demonic activity spilling over from the spiritual to the physical realm. But when we ask the second question, "What are they?" things get a little more dicey.

I suppose the aforementioned four "tiny sliver" categories from the ODNI are possible, but they don't make much sense to me, especially the "foreign adversary systems." Two Navy

pilots in the San Diego area claimed they saw one descend 80,000 feet in only a few seconds. On *60 Minutes*, Lue Elizondo, a former U.S. military official who led the U.S. government's effort to investigate UAP said some of these objects can withstand 600-to-700 g-forces (most of our fighter jets are limited to 7g to 9g); can fly up to 13,000 miles an hour; can evade radar and can fly through air, water and possibly space. He went on to say they had no obvious signs of propulsion, no wings, no control surfaces and yet still can defy the natural effects of Earth's gravity.

As someone who has logged more than 20,000 hours as an airline pilot, I know a little bit about aeronautics, and these characteristics are unfathomable! Do you really think Russia or China, who *combined* have about half the number of military aircraft as the U.S., could come up with this kind of technology? And "airborne clutter"? I think the answer lies in the "catchall 'other' bin" and most likely originates from the spiritual realm, which the ODNI probably knows nothing about. But the Bible knows everything about it.

Even though UFOs are not specifically mentioned in Scripture, as we do with many topics, we can use what I call the Rand McNally method to gain insight from the Bible. Of course, we now have GPS for guidance, but believe or not, Rand McNally still prints paper maps. You remember the drill: You look up a certain town, and it will give the location at something like H-7. You look across the top and find H and then move down until you line up with 7. Somewhere in the vicinity where the two intersect, you will find what you're looking for. Sometimes, we have to search the Bible in this manner on topics that are not clearly spelled out.

If these UFO sightings are, in fact, spiritual, there are only two possibilities: They either originate from God or Satan. This truth is revealed from Genesis to Revelation. Some probably believe they are signs from God, citing Joel 2:30a and Acts 2:19a, "I will show wonders in heaven above." My

problem with that is these are (arguably) not wonders. In fact, they have done nothing but create confusion, and “God is not the author of confusion” (1 Cor. 14:33a).

If we follow that line of thought, that leaves only one choice. The Bible says Satan does “false [or “lying”] wonders” (2 Thess. 2:9b) and “disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14b). I’m not implying the individuals who have seen these UFOs (including me) are somehow closer to the dark side. These occurrences have somehow manifested in our physical realm. Revelation 12:9b says Satan “deceives the whole world.”

But perhaps the stronger argument is to consider how near impossible life elsewhere in our universe is if we look at it through the prism of God’s Word, which God has exalted even above His own name (Ps. 138:2). “Earth” is mentioned about 900 times in the Bible. That’s an average of once per page in many Bibles (depending on size of print and translation). God even says, “Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool” (Isa. 66:1a). We also know that God sent his *only* Son to our planet (John 3:16) as a human *like us* (Gen. 1:26-27) and that Jesus died only *once* (1 Pet. 3:18). We also know that in the millennium, Jesus Himself will come down to the new earth and reign from Jerusalem (Rev. 21:1-3).

I’m just not sure how you squeeze the square peg of life on other planets into the round hole of these and many other Scriptures. But one thing is for sure. As a preacher (whose identity I’ve forgotten) once said when asked if he believed in life on other planets, “Well I don’t know, but if there is, they need a Savior, and His name is Jesus.” {eoa}

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God We Trust" From Motto to Reality, *brings the two together. Nolan has appeared on several Christian television programs, including The Herman and Sharron Show (Christian Television Network), The Bridge (The Miracle Channel in Canada and the NRB channel in the United States) and The Harvest Show (LeSEA Broadcasting Network). His other published works include Where's My 100-Fold Return? A Troubleshooting Guide for the Discouraged Tither (2009), The Sports Edition of the Bible (1996) and The Cowboy Pictorial Edition of the Holy Bible (1981).*

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