

Aliens, Demons, and the Coming Deception: A Biblical-Theological, Historical, and Phenomenological Reassessment of the Extraterrestrial Narrative

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Abstract

This article argues that a significant portion of modern alien discourse is better interpreted through biblical categories of deceptive spiritual agency than through the publicly unverified assumption of extraterrestrial visitation. The argument is cumulative rather than monocausal. It does not claim that every unidentified aerial or anomalous report is demonic, nor that every abduction account is a literal physical kidnapping by non-human beings. Rather, it proceeds in five steps. First, it clarifies the article's epistemic posture and distinguishes biblical theology, public institutional reporting, phenomenology, and eschatological inference. Second, it develops a biblical theology of counterfeit supernaturalism, rival revelation, and end-time delusion. Third, it incorporates primary esoteric sources, especially Alice A. Bailey's language of the "externalisation of the hierarchy" and Benjamin Creme's presentation of UFOs as spiritually guided collaborators of Maitreya, to show that modern alien discourse often functions as an overtly religious and messianic system. Fourth, it re-examines abduction claims in light of sleep paralysis research, cross-cultural nocturnal assault traditions, and the recurring pattern of fear, paralysis, telepathy, domination, and anti-biblical revelation. Fifth, within a dispensational pre-tribulational framework, it considers how the alien narrative could serve as a post-rapture explanatory myth able to absorb social shock while redirecting humanity away from divine judgment. The article concludes that Christians should reject both credulous extraterrestrial speculation and careless sensationalism, recover biblical discernment, and recognize the alien question as part of a larger conflict over revelation, worship, and truth.

Keywords: aliens; demons; UFO; UAP; abduction; Alice Bailey; Benjamin Creme; Maitreya; deception; rapture; biblical theology; apologetics

1. Introduction

The alien question no longer lives only in pulp fiction, fringe documentaries, or late-night speculation. In the past several years, unidentified anomalous phenomena have entered official reporting, elite media discourse, academic debate, and ordinary digital culture. Yet interpretive caution has not kept pace with public fascination. The extraterrestrial hypothesis is still often treated as the modern default, even though official public institutions continue to stress that the available evidence does not justify firm conclusions about non-human visitors from other planets. NASA's 2023 independent study stated plainly that the present body of high-quality observations remains too limited to support firm scientific conclusions about the nature of UAP, and AARO's 2024 historical review found no evidence that previous United States government investigations or official panels confirmed extraterrestrial origin.

For a Christian reader, however, the decisive question is not simply whether strange reports exist. They plainly do. The more consequential question is interpretive. What explanatory framework best accounts for the data when those data include not only unusual aerial reports, but also intelligent entities, telepathic communication, occult mediation, spiritual messaging, abduction narratives, counterfeit salvation themes, and apocalyptic expectation? This article contends that a substantial portion of what modern culture classifies as "alien" is better interpreted through biblical categories of deception, counterfeit supernaturalism, hostile spiritual agency, and false revelation than through the language of interstellar visitation.

That thesis must be stated carefully. The article does not claim that every light in the sky, every military anomaly, every internet testimony, or every abduction report has a single cause. Some cases may involve misidentification, classified technology, folklore, fraud, trauma, parasomnia, or unresolved natural phenomena. The stronger claim is

comparative rather than totalizing. When the discussion shifts from distant lights to revelatory beings, spiritually charged messages, coercive abduction accounts, messianic narratives, and rival cosmologies, the biblical-demonic framework often explains more than the extraterrestrial one.

This revised manuscript also stands in continuity with the author's earlier work on counterfeit spirituality, one-world religion, occult influence, and end-time deception. Those earlier writings repeatedly argued that spiritual deception in the last days would not appear merely as crude evil, but as attractive enlightenment, humanitarian synthesis, elevated consciousness, cosmic rescue, and counterfeit transcendence. The present article extends that line of argument by showing that the modern alien story often functions as precisely such a vehicle.

2. Method, scope, and epistemic posture

A responsible article on aliens and demons must separate at least four levels of discourse. The first is biblical theology: what Scripture explicitly teaches or strongly implies about deceptive spirits, false signs, occult mediation, and end-time delusion. The second is public empirical reporting: what official institutions can and cannot presently verify about UAP. The third is phenomenological comparison: recurring patterns in alien contact, abduction testimony, channeling, and related experiences. The fourth is eschatological inference: how such narratives might function within a particular reading of the end times. Confusion between these levels is one of the main reasons this subject either collapses into sensationalism or is dismissed prematurely.

Accordingly, this article makes no claim that demons can be demonstrated by laboratory technique or that public UAP reporting proves spiritual entities. It asks a different question: which interpretive framework best accounts for the mixture of biblical warning, public non-confirmation of extraterrestrial claims, esoteric primary texts, rival spiritual content, and recurrent encounter phenomenology? The

method is cumulative and comparative. It does not demand certainty at every point. It asks which framework has the greater explanatory force.

Two further clarifications are essential. First, the article does not deny the abstract possibility that biological life may exist elsewhere in God's created universe. That metaphysical possibility is not the same thing as the specific cultural narrative of alien visitation. Second, the article does not use esoteric primary sources as prophecy in the biblical sense. Alice Bailey, Benjamin Creme, and related figures are treated here as documentary witnesses to a spiritual program and worldview, not as inspired truth-tellers. Their value for this article is evidentiary in a historical sense: they show that a network of esoteric thought has long desired the public manifestation of spiritual hierarchies, a world teacher, and a non-biblical reinterpretation of transcendence.

This distinction becomes especially important after 2025. Some of Bailey's most-discussed timelines centered on that year. Since 2025 is now past, those dates cannot be handled as triumphalist proof-texts. Yet their historical value remains considerable. They show that influential esoteric writers explicitly envisioned the public "externalisation" of hidden spiritual powers, the diffusion of consciousness-oriented propaganda, and the emergence of a universal world teacher. Even where their dates prove imprecise, their documentary importance for mapping the architecture of counterfeit revelation remains intact.

3. A biblical theology of deceptive supernaturalism

Scripture presents reality as spiritually populated and morally contested. The Christian is not forced to choose between flat materialism and irrational credulity because the Bible already gives a coherent doctrine of hostile spiritual intelligences. Believers are told that their struggle is not fundamentally against flesh and blood, but against rulers, authorities, cosmic powers of this darkness, and spiritual forces of evil in the heavens (Ephesians

6:12). The New Testament repeatedly warns that deceptive spirits operate in doctrine, morality, worship, and public delusion (1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 12:9).

Several features of this biblical framework matter directly for the alien question. First, deception is central. Satan is not merely an adversary but a deceiver of the whole world (Revelation 12:9). Second, deception is often religious rather than merely violent. Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light, and his servants can appear righteous (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Third, supernatural phenomena are never self-authenticating in Scripture. False christs and false prophets can perform signs capable of misleading, if possible, even the elect (Matthew 24:24). Revelation likewise depicts demonic spirits performing signs in service of end-time rebellion (Revelation 16:13-14).

This biblical pattern immediately challenges the modern reflex that treats every apparently advanced or luminous non-human manifestation as technological, extraterrestrial, or spiritually neutral. Scripture does not allow that shortcut. A being may appear elevated, wise, compassionate, enlightened, or even salvific without being trustworthy. Indeed, biblical deception often works precisely by presenting rebellion in attractive form.

The Bible also forbids occult mediation and illicit access to hidden knowledge. Israel was commanded to reject divination, spirit consultation, and every attempt to bypass God's revelation through rival channels (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). That is especially relevant here because much alien and contactee discourse does not arise through public scientific demonstration. It arrives through telepathy, automatic writing, trance reception, altered states, mediumistic practice, channeling, occult experimentation, or spiritualized consciousness techniques. The outer imagery may be technological, but the epistemology often looks much closer to spirit contact than to science.

Christ remains the decisive center of discernment. There is one mediator between God and humanity (1 Timothy 2:5), and believers are commanded to test the spirits rather than accept every extraordinary manifestation as trustworthy (1 John 4:1). The crucial question is doctrinal. Does the manifestation confess the incarnate Christ, uphold God's holiness, honor the gospel, and call human beings to repentance? Or does it relativize sin, replace Scripture, exalt hidden knowledge, and promise transformation by another route? On biblical grounds, those are the questions that matter most.

4. Biblical prehistory, forbidden mediation, and the problem of non-human intercourse

Many Christian readers who argue that "aliens" are demons also appeal to biblical prehistory, especially Genesis 3 and Genesis 6. These texts must be handled carefully. Genesis 3 undeniably presents a non-human spiritual intelligence entering human history through deception, false promise, and the lure of forbidden knowledge. That pattern alone is highly relevant: rebellion advances through rival revelation, not merely through brute force.

Genesis 6 is more disputed. Some interpreters understand the "sons of God" as fallen angelic beings who crossed a created boundary, while others read the passage differently. This article does not depend on resolving that debate conclusively. Its narrower point is that one influential stream of biblical interpretation has long treated Genesis 6 as evidence that hostile spiritual powers seek illicit intercourse, corruption, and boundary transgression. Even if one does not build a full demonological theory on that passage, it remains striking that many Christian readers instinctively see in it a pattern of spiritual incursion, corruption of humanity, and the production of a counterfeit order.

That broader pattern recurs elsewhere. The biblical world repeatedly opposes illicit mediation, secret wisdom, sorcery, and contact with rival powers. The issue is not merely ethical contamination but alternative revelation. Humanity repeatedly seeks elevation by means other than obedience to God.

The temptation is old: hidden knowledge, empowered intermediaries, and a promise of becoming more than human without submission to the Creator.

For that reason, some of the stronger contemporary Christian arguments do not depend on saying that "the Bible teaches UFOs." That is usually a weak formulation. The stronger claim is that Scripture already supplies categories for understanding deceptive non-human agency, counterfeit revelation, and spiritually mediated enchantment. Modern alien discourse can therefore be evaluated without forcing anachronistic vocabulary into the biblical text.

5. The esoteric genealogy: from Theosophy to the "externalisation of the hierarchy"

One of the most important enrichments to this revised manuscript is the integration of primary esoteric sources. The most revealing material is not found in speculative internet rumor, but in the self-description of esoteric teachers and organizations themselves. Alice A. Bailey is especially significant. In *The Externalisation of the Hierarchy*, she described a coming period in which intensified interaction between humanity and a spiritual hierarchy would culminate in a public stage of "externalisation," explicitly tied to the year 2025. In the same corpus, she envisioned a preparatory era of social, educational, and religious transformation that would ready humanity for a closer manifestation of spiritual masters.

The importance of Bailey for this article is not that she can predict the future infallibly. She cannot. The importance is documentary. Her writings show that a major stream of twentieth-century esotericism explicitly anticipated a movement from hidden spiritual influence to open public manifestation. That is extraordinarily relevant to the biblical theme of counterfeit supernaturalism. In *The Rays and the Initiations*, Bailey spoke in terms suggesting that the hierarchy would eventually function openly on the physical plane and that the "Masters" would move publicly among human beings. In *Discipleship in the*

New Age, she spoke of propaganda and consciousness-formation oriented toward 2025. In *The Reappearance of the Christ*, she recast “the Christ” not as the unique incarnate Son of God, but as a universalized world teacher bound up with spiritual evolution.

This matters because it demonstrates that the problem is not merely secular fascination with space. It is also a consciously articulated esoteric program. Bailey’s “Christ” is not the Jesus Christ of apostolic Christianity. It is a counterfeit christology, detached from incarnation, atonement, repentance, and biblical authority. Her “hierarchy” functions as a mediating order between God and humanity, precisely the kind of rival spiritual structure Scripture teaches believers to reject.

It is also important to note what happened after Bailey. Her vision did not remain a closed literary system. It was extended, popularized, and re-narrated by later esoteric figures, most notably Benjamin Creme and the Share International movement. That continuity shows that the expectation of manifested non-human guidance did not disappear with Bailey. It evolved into a more explicitly messianic and UFO-suffused form.

6. Maitreya, UFO spirituality, and counterfeit christology

Benjamin Creme’s writings and the continuing public material of Share International are exceptionally revealing because they combine messianic expectation, UFO belief, and spiritual hierarchy in a single system. Share International continues to present Maitreya as the world teacher expected by the major religions, explicitly identifying him across traditions as the awaited Christ, Messiah, Krishna, Maitreya Buddha, or Imam Mahdi. That claim is theologically devastating from a Christian standpoint because it dissolves the uniqueness of Jesus Christ into a syncretistic universal teacher.

The same network also speaks of UFOs in overtly spiritual terms. Share International presents the

so-called “Space Brothers” as engaged in a benign spiritual mission to assist humanity and work alongside Maitreya and the Masters of Wisdom. This is not a neutral extraterrestrial hypothesis. It is a full spiritual cosmology. UFOs are not merely vehicles in this system. They are instruments of salvation history within a rival eschatology.

At this point the Christian concern becomes sharper. The modern alien narrative is often presented popularly as science, but in some of its most self-conscious forms it functions as overt religion. It offers revelation, intermediaries, cosmic helpers, a universal teacher, planetary transformation, and the reinterpretation of all major religions under one non-biblical framework. In theological terms, it offers a rival soteriology and a rival christology.

This insight also clarifies why the alien question is not finally reducible to “Do creatures exist elsewhere in the universe?” That abstract question is not the same as a system in which spiritually guided extraterrestrials collaborate with a universal world teacher in the redemption of humanity. Once that system is visible, the Christian objection is no longer eccentric. It is the natural consequence of biblical discernment.

7. The alien mythos as a rival religion

Scholars of religion have long noted that UFO discourse routinely behaves as a religious system rather than a mere scientific conjecture. Sinani’s survey of UFO religions showed that these movements generate doctrine, ritual, cosmology, myth, authority structures, and eschatological expectation. Partridge’s work on “alien demonology” is especially important because it demonstrates that modern malevolent extraterrestrial imagery often inherits patterns from older Christian demonological structures, even as the surrounding culture repackages those patterns in technological form.

This scholarship strongly supports the central claim of the present article. Modern alien discourse regularly offers the elements a religion offers. It

gives an account of the human problem, whether ecological ignorance, low consciousness, spiritual immaturity, or social division. It offers revelation through higher beings. It promises rescue through awakening, disclosure, advanced guidance, or planetary intervention. It often recasts salvation as elevation rather than forgiveness, and transformation as consciousness-expansion rather than reconciliation with God.

That grammar is not spiritually innocent. It displaces the biblical story at every key point. Sin becomes ignorance. Revelation becomes channeled or telepathic disclosure. Redemption becomes uplift. Christ becomes one among several higher instructors, or is replaced entirely by a universal teacher. Judgment becomes planetary correction or vibrational sorting. The church is not simply confronted here by science-fiction entertainment. It is confronted by a rival sacred canopy.

This is one reason the article's thesis should not be caricatured as irrational fear of the unknown. The issue is not fear of life beyond Earth. The issue is discernment regarding a culturally powerful narrative that repeatedly performs religious work while masquerading as neutral speculation.

8. Why the extraterrestrial hypothesis remains underdetermined

Public discourse often behaves as though "unexplained" and "extraterrestrial" were nearly interchangeable. That inference is unwarranted. NASA's 2023 study emphasized that high-quality, calibrated, multi-sensor data remain too limited for firm scientific conclusions about the nature of many UAP reports. AARO's 2024 historical report went further, concluding that no previous United States government investigation, academic-sponsored review, or official panel had confirmed that a reported UAP sighting represented extraterrestrial life or off-world technology.

Those official findings do not explain every case. But they do accomplish something crucial. They remove the illusion that extraterrestrial visitation has

already been publicly established. Once that illusion is removed, the field of interpretation reopens. The alien explanation becomes one hypothesis among others, not the default "scientific" answer.

This matters because many influential encounter narratives do not read like ordinary contact with biological organisms from another planet. They are often ontologically unstable. The alleged beings move between physical and immaterial presence. Their communication is frequently telepathic. The experiences involve paralysis, missing time, symbolic imagery, altered consciousness, revelatory messaging, and spiritually loaded content. That profile fits awkwardly within a simple nuts-and-bolts space-travel model. It fits far more naturally with liminal, visionary, occultic, or spiritualized phenomena.

A biblical-demonic framework has an explanatory advantage precisely here. It can account for ambiguity, shape-shifting presentation, counterfeit authority, fear, false revelation, and the blend of psychological and spiritual disturbance without requiring confidence that every case reduces to one purely material mechanism.

9. Abduction testimony, sleep paralysis, and hostile encounter phenomenology

The abduction question requires unusual care because it concerns people who often report intense fear, violation, confusion, and lasting distress. A serious Christian analysis should neither mock them nor canonize every report as proof of literal extraterrestrial kidnapping. The interpretive question is again decisive.

A substantial body of clinical literature shows that sleep paralysis can produce vivid immobilization, sensed presence, chest pressure, terror, visual and auditory hallucinations, floating sensations, and other uncanny experiences. Jalal has shown how such episodes can be subjectively intense and terrifying, while McNally and Clancy found that some people who believed they had experienced alien abduction described episodes strongly

associated with sleep paralysis and hypnopompic hallucination. Review literature also demonstrates that culturally different societies interpret similar events as attacks by demons, spirits, witches, ghosts, jinn, or, in modern technological cultures, aliens.

This cross-cultural pattern is crucial. It suggests that at least one major class of abduction narratives may involve a real human experience but a mistaken explanatory overlay. The paralysis may be real. The sensed presence may be real as experience. The terror may be real. The cultural naming of the event as extraterrestrial, however, may be mistaken.

At the same time, not every report fits neatly within a parasomnia template. Some include repeated contact scenarios, occult entanglement, anti-Christian or evolutionary messaging, and a coercive quality that exceeds a simple sleep-paralysis description. Here the demonic framework becomes more relevant. A biblical reading does not require every event to be physically identical. Hostile spiritual assault may exploit liminal states, trauma, bodily vulnerability, and suggestion while still functioning as spiritually deceptive oppression.

The phenomenological texture of many alien encounter narratives is also revealing. They frequently feature domination rather than benevolence, dread rather than peace, intrusion rather than consent, and imposed communication rather than transparent exchange. In some accounts there is sexualized violation, reproductive anxiety, or the breakdown of ordinary agency. Such features resonate poorly with the image of morally advanced scientific visitors. They resonate far more naturally with pathological nocturnal assault experiences, hostile spiritual oppression, or some combination of both.

For that reason, the strongest Christian claim is not that every abductee has been physically carried into a spacecraft by a demon. The stronger and more defensible claim is that the alien interpretation is often accepted far too quickly, even where the

experiences themselves are psychologically, spiritually, or phenomenologically more consistent with other frameworks.

10. Open manifestation, narrative conditioning, and the management of transcendence

The earlier essays that informed this revision repeatedly argued that modern society is being conditioned to accept non-biblical transcendence in technologically respectable form. That claim needs tightening, but not abandonment. The strongest version does not say that every official discussion of life beyond Earth is itself demonic propaganda. It says that modern institutions, media systems, and spiritual networks have together created a cultural environment in which non-biblical explanations of transcendence can be normalized quickly.

A useful example is the public conversation around the societal implications of extraterrestrial discovery. NASA did not “hire priests to prepare the world for aliens” in the simplistic sense often repeated online. But NASA’s Astrobiology Program did help fund a two-year inquiry at the Center of Theological Inquiry on the societal implications of astrobiology. That fact should be stated accurately. The significance is not conspiratorial proof. It is that elite institutions recognize that the discovery of life beyond Earth would have major social, philosophical, and religious consequences. Even when handled soberly, such work contributes to a cultural environment in which the question of non-human life is treated as civilizationaly plausible.

This broader normalization matters because deception rarely begins at the moment of crisis. It is usually prepared in advance. A society is habituated to certain categories, symbols, and explanatory possibilities before those categories are mobilized in a decisive event. In that sense, the modern alien narrative is powerful because it can satisfy multiple constituencies at once. It can speak to the secular imagination as a scientific frontier, to the esoteric

imagination as cosmic awakening, and to the anxious public as an explanatory myth for disruption.

The point here is not that every discussion of astrobiology is spiritually corrupt. The point is that the alien idea now possesses enormous interpretive availability. It has become one of the most culturally ready explanations for the uncanny.

11. A pre-tribulational inference: the alien narrative after the rapture

Within a dispensational pre-tribulational reading of Scripture, the church will be caught up to meet the Lord before the outpouring of divine wrath (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). That reading is not shared by all orthodox Christians, and this article acknowledges that. Yet if one adopts it, a practical question immediately arises. How would a rebellious world explain the sudden disappearance of multitudes without confessing that Christ has acted?

The alien narrative is unusually suited for that role. It already normalizes selective removal, intervention by superior intelligences, planetary crisis, civilizational transition, and non-biblical transcendence. In such a framework, disappearances could be narrated as rescue, extraction, dimensional transition, evolutionary sorting, or the removal of obstructive persons from a planetary reset. A world already trained to think in these terms would not need to accept biblical judgment in order to explain catastrophic absence.

This is where the author's earlier essays on end-time deception remain particularly useful. Their deepest insight was not the certainty of every surrounding geopolitical detail, but the recognition that narrative control after a civilizational shock would be crucial. A post-rapture world would need a rival explanation capable of absorbing panic, preserving order, and redirecting allegiance away from the true Christ. Few modern narratives are as ready for that task as the alien mythos.

That inference also fits the biblical pattern of strong delusion and sign-bearing deception (2 Thessalonians 2:9-11; Revelation 13:13-14). Scripture does not require that the final deception use twentieth-century UFO imagery. Yet if the biblical pattern is one of counterfeit transcendence adapted to the assumptions of an age, then the alien narrative is an exceptionally plausible contemporary vehicle.

12. Objections, limitations, and cautions

Several objections deserve explicit treatment. The first is psychological reductionism. Perhaps alien encounters are exhausted by sleep paralysis, suggestion, trauma, media contagion, and memory distortion. That objection has force with respect to many cases, and Christians should welcome natural explanations where they fit. Yet reductionism explains less well the persistent religious structure of the phenomenon, the continuity with occult mediation, and the explicit messianic claims visible in esoteric primary sources.

A second objection is that this article over-spiritualizes ambiguous material. That danger is real. Christians do themselves no service when they make every anomaly demonic by reflex. For that reason this article has refused monocausality throughout. Misidentification, fraud, folklore, classified technology, parasomnia, and psychological distress remain valid explanatory categories. The article's claim is not that all UAP are demons. It is that the alien-contact narrative, especially in its spiritually loaded forms, is more coherently interpreted through biblical categories of deception than through the publicly unverified extraterrestrial model.

A third objection concerns exegesis. Some of the biblical passages often drawn into this discussion, especially Genesis 6 and Daniel 2:43, are debated. That is true, and it must be conceded. This article therefore uses those texts illustratively and secondarily, not as the sole pillars of the thesis. The core biblical case rests instead on uncontested New Testament teaching regarding deceptive spirits, false

signs, counterfeit messiahs, occult mediation, and end-time delusion.

A fourth objection concerns the use of Bailey and Creme. If some of their dated expectations have not unfolded in a dramatic public manner, why use them at all? The answer is historical and theological. They are not used here as true prophets but as primary-source evidence of a worldview. Their writings document a long-standing aspiration toward manifested spiritual hierarchy, universal messianism, and spiritually guided UFO belief. That is precisely why they matter.

A final caution concerns tone. This subject attracts panic, curiosity, and conspiracy excess. Christians should reject all three. The proper response is sober discernment. Weak evidence should remain weak evidence. Strong claims should be distinguished from plausible inference. And fascination with the alien topic should never overshadow the ordinary work of faithfulness, repentance, discipleship, and witness.

13. Conclusion

The strongest Christian case is not that every unexplained object in the sky is a demon in disguise. It is that the modern alien narrative, especially where it involves revelatory beings, abduction, spiritual messaging, universal teachers, and eschatological expectation, is better interpreted through biblical categories of deception than through the publicly unverified assumption of extraterrestrial visitation.

This revised manuscript has strengthened that claim in three ways. First, it has retained the official empirical caution of NASA and AARO, thereby refusing the lazy move from anomaly to extraterrestrial certainty. Second, it has incorporated primary esoteric sources, especially Alice Bailey and Benjamin Creme, which show that key strands of alien discourse explicitly seek the public manifestation of spiritual hierarchies, a universal world teacher, and spiritually framed UFO intervention. Third, it has situated abduction claims within the overlapping domains of sleep paralysis,

nocturnal assault traditions, hostile encounter phenomenology, and biblical demonology.

If this analysis is sound, then the alien question is not finally about astronomy. It is about revelation, mediation, worship, and deception. It is about whether humanity will receive truth from God in Christ or from counterfeit powers dressed in the language of enlightenment, peace, rescue, and cosmic fraternity. The task of the church is therefore neither ridicule nor panic, but discernment. In an age prepared for non-biblical transcendence, that discernment is not a fringe concern. It is part of ordinary Christian fidelity.

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