1 – What is the Alien Gospel?
2 – Invasion by the Forces of Darkness
3 – Invasion by the Forces of Light? UFOs? Hybrids/Giants?
4 – Apocryphal Works: Old and New
5 – Reverse-Engineering/Embellishment of Artistic Works
6 – "As the Days of Noah. . . Seed of the Woman"
7 – Staying on Track
8 – Where to Draw the Line
APPENDIX 1: *"Mingle themselves with seed of men"* (Daniel 2:43)
APPENDIX 2: Why the *Book of Enoch* was not written by Enoch
APPENDIX 3: What's wrong with the *Book of Jasher*?
APPENDIX 4: How Canon Scripture Differs from Apocryphal Literature

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8 – Where to Draw the Line

https://endtimeupgrade.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Alien8.mp3

In this study much focus has been directed to questions of doctrine – in the hope of finding more updated interpretations, aided by recent historical hindsight and better understanding of the Bible's ancient predictions. But getting too picky about doctrinal matters (such as "alien gospel") can become counter-productive. It is easy, for example, to make a big deal out of the "grave doctrinal impurities" of certain religious groups.

But whatever we may think of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons (whose Bible contains the *Book of Jasher*), or other new religious movements, scathing denunciations of their doctrinal impurities tend to sound rather hollow. Why? Because such denunciations overlook the fact that these groups are doing the job that many others are not willing to do – making the effort to go out into the highways and byways to bring the Good News to others. *"By their fruits you will know them,"* Jesus said. (Matthew 7:20)

And in spite of a few quirky doctrinal elements or practices, many of these new religious movements harbor plenty of worthwhile truth. So it is

unfair to make blanket statements, denunciating them in negative terms, when God is probably quite happy that they are winning people to Him, and forging into new domains of truth and understanding.

In God's eyes, bearing fruit seems to be the yardstick that He is more concerned with, while "doctrinal correctness" is a secondary consideration. In the Old Testament, if we look, for example, at the life of Samson, we see in him someone who broke all the rules. Yet he had God's anointing, and God used him mightily even after his waywardness with Delilah got him in trouble.

Or another example: When God, through the prophet Jonah, warned Nineveh that in 40 days' time their city would be destroyed, nothing happened. Why? Because God was looking on the heart, not "doctrinal correctness". The Ninevite king and his people had humbled themselves before God… who offered this explanation to His prophet, *"And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left – and much livestock?"* (Jonah 4:11)

Jonah felt righteously indignant because God had failed to destroy the wicked city in the specified time frame. But God was looking on the heart of the people – their repentance and the fact that so many innocents lived there (120,000 children and the livestock). Their "doctrinal impurity" – their false worship system, or even preservation of the integrity of God's prediction through the prophet Jonah – was not the main issue as far as God was concerned. It was their obedient response to His Word of warning that mattered.

During His earthly ministry, Jesus took a tolerant view of those whom His disciples criticized for not being in the mainstream of His own movement then. *"John said to Him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not stop him, for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me. For the one who is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward.'"* (Mark 9:38-41, ESV)

In a similar instance back in Moses' time, when two Israelites, who were not part of the 70 chosen elders, were found to be prophesying, Joshua came running to Moses, saying, *"My lord Moses, forbid them."* Moses, burdened with much leadership responsibility, replied, *'Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!"* (Numbers 11:28-29 – KJV) The crux of the matter, in this case, was envy. Almost subconsciously, those who are "established" religious leaders (like Moses' chosen 70 elders) become jealous of those who manage to operate effectively outside the boundaries of their particular religious circle.

The same might be said regarding the "alien gospel". Only a few are using it for the wrong reasons. Most of those who may adhere to these ideas are good Christian people, and regardless of a few doctrinal quirks, they are bringing forth much fruit for God's Kingdom. The Lord looks at things differently to how we do – on the heart, not the outward appearance of doctrinal correctness.

So it doesn't seem the Lord is all that concerned about "doctrinal purity" – a little concerned, but not all that worried about it. He probably overlooks those who are not perfectly right-on in some of their less important doctrines (like the "alien gospel") as long as they are pulling in the right general direction, that is, getting the job done of bringing lost souls into the Kingdom.

Now sometimes a minor doctrine does relate to a current issue, and in such a case it transforms into a major doctrine that demands an accurate understanding. A current example might be God's promises to the Israeli nation that they would have certain borders for their land. These promises from the Scriptures are often used as doctrinal justification in our modern times for hostile acts of land-grabbing and oppression of the local Palestinian population who happen to be living in the land that Israelis think belongs to them by divine decree.

In this case, there is a lack of accurate understanding: the promises to Abraham, Moses, and Joshua in the Book of Genesis were fulfilled long ago during the reign of king Solomon and do not apply to the present situation. Another one in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 47, is meant for the future, the age of the Millennium, and also does not apply to the present

situation. (For more information on this, see discussion on verse 7 of the Ezekiel 38-39 post.)

The Scriptures hold great authority in the minds of many people, as they should. But when they are being pulled out of context in order to confuse and misdirect people's minds, and to put a sacred veneer over policies that are contrary to the will of God, then this is a serious violation; and such contortions of doctrine need to get straightened out.

But for minor disagreements, those who want to bring scathing denunciations against new religious movements or wayward doctrinal positions, should bear in mind the apostle Paul's words in Romans chapter 2, which show a great deal of tolerance towards those who did not have the doctrinally correct belief system.

In this passage Paul is addressing those who *"boast in God"* and felt *"sure"* that they were *"a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of children, having in the law the embodiment of knowledge and truth."* (2:17-20, ESV) And he warns them, *"You then who teach others, do you not teach yourself?* (2:21, ESV) He says also, *"You have no excuse, O man, everyone of you who judges…* For *"when God's righteous judgment will be revealed"*, then *"He will render to each one according to his works."* (2:1,6, ESV)

It is wise then for us to remember Paul's admonition against favoritism:

> ***For God shows no partiality… it is not the hearers of the law*** **[those who feel they are doctrinally correct]** ***who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness.*** **(2:11,13-15 – ESV)**

Again, it is a matter of *"by their fruits you will know them."* (Matthew 7:20)

In this study, the purpose has been to establish a solid doctrinal

foundation, to focus on the theological angle… and to do so without indulging in scathing denunciations of wayward doctrinal theories. Regarding the "alien gospel", this is a doctrine that has sprouted on the Christian landscape, with many roots and overspreading branches, and there is a need to establish what is fact and what is fiction.

As we have learned, every historical age has its body of speculative, imaginative literature, and it should not surprise us, especially in this generation living so close to the "end of days", that there should exist a large body of artistic works focusing on various End of the Age scenarios. It will be helpful then to establish what is genuine. And as it was with the early church fathers, that requires sifting through a large body of material and sorting out the true gold from the abundance of fool's gold.

In the Time of the End we are told that *"those of the people who understand shall instruct many."* (Daniel 11:33) So in a future time, for those who will be called to this kind of task, it will necessitate having a clear idea of what is reality in Biblical doctrine and what isn't, to sort out beforehand what is fact from fiction.

Certainly, unusual things will transpire during history's last few years. And as defenders of the faith we should be ready for anything. *"For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath."* (Revelation 12:12) However, there is no point getting worked up about a big scenario that is apt to be more fiction than fact.

To navigate through rough seas, a ship cannot afford to be loaded in lopsided fashion. Likewise, if the "ship" of Biblical doctrine is getting lopsided, then, to prevent the danger of its keeling over, there is a need to stabilize it before heading out into the storm-tossed sea of the End Time.

So, regarding these "alien gospel" doctrines, it is needful to sort out what is true and what is not. Like the apocryphal and pseud-epigraphical writings of old, they can make for interesting reading, but the Scriptural backing, which they often claim to have, is sometimes lacking. In some cases, the Scriptures have been *"tampered"* with in *"underhanded ways"*. (2Corinthians 4:2, ESV)

Like the many other "genres" we've studied – the Apocrypha, Sci-Fi literature, evolution theory, legends of king Arthur, etc. – they invariably start with some truth. They may be built on a true *"foundation"* (Jesus Christ and the Word of God). But some of the scenarios built on that *"foundation"* are misleading and resemble *"wood, hay, straw"* more than *"gold, silver, precious stones".* (1Corinthians 3:11-15)

"Alien gospel", it is true, does rest on a solid foundation in the Scriptures about the Time of the End – in particular, what the Revelation Book foretells about the expulsion of Satan and his hordes out of heaven and into the earth. (Revelation 12) But on this foundation we do need to discern between those structures that are rickety and those that are strong and well built.

So "Alien Gospel – fact or fiction?" To sum it up, we could say it starts with fact, but human imagination tends to wander off into conjecture and fancy. Imagination, truly enough, is essential to advancement and progress, but once in awhile, such exploration needs a dose of healthy skepticism to restore balance and perspective.

Does one need to study the Apocryphal works on which much of the Alien Gospel is based? No. But if you have the time and are the studious sort and are praying for discernment, you might consider delving into them.

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(NEXT) APPENDIX 1: *"Mingle themselves with seed of men"* (Daniel 2:43)