

Week 6 · The Great Deception

“Aliens,” the Seed of the Serpent & the Coming Delusion

Anchor texts — Luke 21:11, 25–28 · 2 Thessalonians 2:3–12 · Genesis 3:15 · Matthew 24:24 · Revelation 12 · 2 Corinthians 11:3–4 (ESV)

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A NOTE ON SOURCES AND ON HONESTY

The framework in this study leans on the work of Dr. Michael S. Heiser, especially *The Unseen Realm* and *Demons* (Lexham Press). Heiser himself remained cautious about tying modern UAP reports directly to biblical prophecy, and so are we. That spiritual beings exist, that some deceive, that Satan disguises himself as an angel of light, and that false signs and wonders mark the last days are *doctrines*. Whether any particular modern report is that activity is *application*, and application stays humble. Where researchers such as Gary Bates are cited, their work is presented as reported findings, not as Scripture and not as proof. We chase no conspiracy theories. Our authority is the Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

The Promise Comes Due

For six weeks we rebuilt a biblical worldview one passage at a time. We did not chase headlines or begin with sensational claims. We let Scripture establish its own categories for the unseen realm first. That order was deliberate. A church that studies the strange only when the news demands it will always be reacting. A church that knows the Word already knows how to think.

Phobētra: a word we usually read past

“There will be great earthquakes, and in various places famines and pestilences. And there will be terrors and great signs from heaven.”

LUKE 21:11 (ESV)

“Terrors” translates **phobētra**, related to the root behind our word *phobia*. It does not name the emotion. It names the things that produce it: terrifying sights, dreadful spectacles, fearful appearances. Jesus was not only predicting natural disasters. He warned that humanity would witness sights that produce worldwide fear.

Two questions, and only one of them is ours

The culture asks, “Are we alone?” The assumption underneath is that humanity is waiting to discover intelligent non-human life for the first time. Scripture never asks that. From Genesis

to Revelation it assumes such beings already exist: cherubim, seraphim, the sons of God, the heavenly host, principalities, authorities, angels, demons, the divine council. The Bible's question has always been: **who are they, who has been crossing over, and why?**

“Are there UFOs?”

Yes, and that answer tells you almost nothing. UFO means *unidentified flying object*; the government now prefers UAP, *unidentified anomalous phenomena*. The word describes the limits of the observer, not the nature of the object. Thousands of reports are filed yearly, many by trained pilots, radar operators, and police. Most resolve to ordinary explanations: drones, balloons, aircraft, atmospheric effects, sensor artifacts. A remainder does not. Our interest is not the lights. It is the category.

Why we are willing to teach this

Many Christians have felt they could never bring these questions into church. Heiser remarked more than once that he had better theological conversations at UFO conferences than in many churches. The tragedy is not that the world asks hard questions. It is when the church refuses to answer them biblically. Nobody should have to leave the church to receive a serious biblical answer. This should be the safest room in the city to ask a difficult question.

BIG IDEA

- *Phobētra* means the fearful sights themselves, not the feeling of fear.
- The world asks “Are we alone?” Scripture asks “Who has been crossing over, and why?”
- “Are there UFOs?” Yes, trivially. The word only describes what an observer could not identify.
- Doctrine is fixed; application stays humble. Scripture owns the category.

MOVEMENT I

The Oldest Pattern: Crossing Over

Beings from the unseen realm entering the visible world is not a modern idea forced onto the Bible. It is one of Scripture's oldest patterns, and we walked through it week by week without naming it.

- **Eden.** Overlapping space, where the *nachash* walked and spoke (Week 2).
- **Genesis 6.** The sons of God crossed a boundary God set, taking on flesh and its capacities (Week 2).
- **Genesis 18-19.** Messengers ate at Abraham's table and were mistaken for ordinary men.
- **Daniel 10.** The prince of Persia delayed a message twenty-one days until Michael came (Week 3).

Scripture presents two realms, visible and invisible, never separated by distance but *overlapping*, opened and closed at God's will. Different centuries, same pattern.

Four claims, every one already proven

By now Scripture has established that the beings of the unseen realm are **real** (not symbolic), **personal** (they think, decide, speak, worship, obey, rebel), **able to manifest** (to Abraham, Jacob, Mary, the women at the tomb), and **able to deceive** (the serpent deceived Eve; lying spirits empowered false prophets; Satan disguises himself as an angel of light).

Ezekiel 1 is not a spacecraft

Whenever people claim the Bible describes a UFO, they point to Ezekiel 1. But we are not left to guess. Every element of that vision is known to us from Babylonian and Near Eastern imagery: composite four-faced guardian creatures, wheels, a platform above them, and a throne above the platform with a figure enthroned. Ezekiel is not describing transportation. He is describing a *throne*, and the glory of God seated on it.

Remember where he stands: in Babylon with the exiles, among people wondering whether Marduk had defeated Israel's God. The vision answers that fear. The God of Israel is enthroned, mobile, and sovereign over history, even in Babylon. Read as a spacecraft, the chapter loses its comfort entirely. Read as a throne, it is one of the most reassuring chapters in the Old Testament.

No ancient text puts the gods on planets

Neither the Bible nor the wider literature of the ancient Near East places the gods on distant worlds. They come from heaven, from the divine realm. They descend, appear, and manifest. They ride chariots and sit on thrones. They are never travelers from another solar system. Reading extraterrestrials into Genesis 6 or Ezekiel 1 imports a modern idea into the text rather than drawing meaning out of it, the opposite of the discipline we set in Week 1.

What a disclosure would and would not reveal

In February 2026 the administration directed federal agencies to identify, review, and release records related to unidentified anomalous phenomena. On May 8, 2026, the first batch was published, 162 files posted publicly, with more released on a rolling basis in the weeks that followed. Government analysts have been consistent that most cases resolve to ordinary explanations and that nothing released constitutes evidence of extraterrestrial technology. A portion remains unresolved.

Suppose one morning something is announced that cannot be explained away. Would that create a brand new category of being? Biblically, no. **It would reveal an ancient category in a new costume.** The names may change, the headlines may change, the technology may change. The strategy has not changed since Eden.

BIG IDEA

- Crossing over is the Bible's oldest pattern: Eden, Genesis 6, Abraham's table, Daniel 10.
- The two realms are not separated by distance. They overlap at God's will.
- Ezekiel 1 describes an enthroned God, not a craft.
- No ancient text places the gods on other planets.
- A disclosure would reveal an ancient category in a new costume.

MOVEMENT II

The Strategy: Deception, Not Invasion

The enemy is not creative. He is consistent. What is coming is not an invasion. What is coming, and what has always come, is deception.

The method was set in Eden

The serpent's opening move was not force. It was a question: *“Did God really say?”* He did not overpower Eve. He got her to reconsider what God had said. That is the whole strategy, and it has never needed an update. The message underneath any costume is identical: question God's Word, replace God's truth, offer a better explanation.

The disguise is part of the design

“And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness.”

2 CORINTHIANS 11:14–15 (ESV)

The Greek is **metaschēmatisō**: *meta* (change, the root behind *metamorphosis*) plus *schēma* (outward form). It describes a change of outward appearance that may not reflect what is underneath. Scripture demonstrates the capacity repeatedly: the sons of God appeared as men; messengers at the tomb appear as a young man in white in one Gospel and two men in dazzling apparel in another; the risen Christ was mistaken for a gardener, entered a locked room, and according to Mark appeared “in another form.” The capacity is not evil in itself. What matters is who uses it, and why.

Jesus warned the church, not the world

One warning is repeated four times in Matthew 24 (vv. 4, 5, 11, 24): do not be led astray. The Greek **planaō** described a traveler who missed the road and wandered. It is the root behind our word *planet*, from the wandering lights that broke the fixed pattern of the stars. Jesus says the deception will lead astray, if possible, even the elect. He is warning *His church*.

TEACHING PAUSE

The enemy does not have to eliminate Christianity. He only has to redefine Christ. He does not have to destroy the truth. He only has to replace it with something that looks close enough.

The delusion is judicial, not random

“The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion.”

2 THESSALONIANS 2:9–11 (ESV)

That day does not come until the rebellion comes first. The Greek is ***apostasia***: a falling away, a deliberate departure from revealed truth. God is not deceiving innocent people. Paul states the reason in the middle of the sentence: *they refused to love the truth*. The delusion falls on hearts that already rejected God's revelation. People are not deceived because they lack intelligence, but because truth was offered and declined.

The same war, from Genesis to Revelation

“And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world.”

REVELATION 12:9 (ESV)

Not the destroyer of the whole world. The *deceiver* of the whole world. Same rebellion, same strategy, garden to end.

Why “aliens” would be the perfect costume

- **It rewrites our origin.** Genesis says God created mankind in His image. The counterfeit says humanity was engineered by advanced beings, and Genesis becomes unnecessary.
- **It reduces Christ.** Scripture says Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. The counterfeit says He was one enlightened teacher among many visitors.
- **It replaces salvation.** The gospel says salvation comes through the cross. The counterfeit offers secret knowledge and evolution into something greater.
- **It arrives wrapped in phobētra.** When deception comes through overwhelming spectacle, people stop asking the only question that matters: does this agree with the Word of God?

Deception succeeds because it contains just enough truth to make the lie believable.

The messaging is the tell

When researchers catalogued so-called contact experiences, descriptions varied enormously. What stayed stable was *what people were told*: Jesus reduced to one of many, the Bible questioned, sin minimized, people redirected to look within themselves, salvation redefined as enlightenment. Jacques Vallée, a respected researcher not writing as a Christian, concluded decades ago that something deeply deceptive ran through this messaging. The question is not “What did people see?” but “What were they told?” Scripture never tells us to evaluate an experience by its appearance. It tells us to test its message.

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

1 JOHN 4:1 (ESV)

Keeping heaven's furniture and removing God

WHAT SCRIPTURE GIVES	WHAT THE COUNTERFEIT SUBSTITUTES
God's throne	A galactic federation
The heavenly host	Advanced civilizations
The divine council	Cosmic councils
The kingdom of God	An enlightened government from the stars
Salvation through the cross	Evolution into higher consciousness

Notice what remains: superior beings, higher intelligence, transcendence, a plan, a destiny. All of heaven's furniture is still in the room. Only God has been removed, and with Him sin, holiness, judgment, and the cross. You are left with heaven without holiness and destiny without accountability.

The vocabulary hijack

“But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed... you put up with it readily enough.”

2 CORINTHIANS 11:3–4 (ESV)

Paul did not fear that the Corinthians would reject Jesus outright. He feared they would receive *another Jesus* and put up with it readily. Note how he introduces the danger: by pointing straight back to the serpent and Eve. Keep the names, change the meanings. God becomes a transcendent intelligence, Jesus a messenger, salvation an evolution. Every word survives; the gospel does not.

REPORTED FINDINGS, NOT SCRIPTURE

Gary Bates documented encounter phenomena that were deceptive and occult-adjacent, and reported that experiences ceased when the name of Jesus was invoked. Heiser, working from his own contacts in that field, independently reported over a hundred documented cases in which invoking the name of Jesus ended repeated experiences permanently. Two researchers, from different corners of the field, reporting the same tell. Heiser also offered a discernment framework worth keeping: *most* such cases likely have human causes, while *some* bear marks of direct demonic activity. All of this is presented as reported findings, not as Scripture and not as proof. What the pattern suggests is a category, and the category is not extraterrestrial.

You are not approaching this from weakness

“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

COLOSSIANS 2:15 (ESV)

You already know these powers, and you already know they have been disarmed. The church does not study its way out of deception. It stands in a victory won without our help and undoable by our ignorance. The safest Christian in the room is not the one with the most information about the counterfeit. It is the one who knows Jesus Christ.

BIG IDEA

- The method was set in Eden: not force, but “Did God really say?”
- *Metaschēmatizō*: the enemy changes outward form. The disguise is part of the design.
- *Planaō*, four times in Matthew 24: to be led off the path. Jesus warns the church.
- The strong delusion is judicial. It lands on those who refused to love the truth.
- The counterfeit keeps heaven's furniture and removes God, sin, and the cross.
- The endgame is “another Jesus”: keep the words, change the meanings.

MOVEMENT III

The Truth That Cannot Be Deceived

If deception increases, how does anyone stand? Paul already answered, and the answer is not more information about the counterfeit.

Love the truth

People perish in the last days not because deception is too powerful, but “because they refused to love the truth and so be saved” (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Note the verb. Not *know* the truth. *Love* it. A person can know a great deal of doctrine and still be moved by whatever is most impressive in the room. Love is what holds when the spectacle arrives. And the truth Paul describes is not finally a set of propositions. Jesus said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). The Truth is a Person. You cannot deceive someone away from Christ who genuinely knows Him.

One crossing over unlike all the others

“Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”

1 TIMOTHY 3:16 (ESV)

The same Yahweh who walked in Eden, who sat at Abraham's table, who filled the temple with glory, is the God who was manifest in the flesh. Not a delegate sent in His place. Not a lesser power beside Him. **One God, made visible.** Paul says it as directly as language allows: “For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9). The whole fullness. Nothing withheld, nothing divided.

Notice why that matters here. The counterfeit never tries to erase Jesus. It shrinks Him, keeping Him in the conversation as a teacher or a visitor, because a demoted Jesus is far more useful to a lie than an absent one. The answer to a shrunken Christ is not a better argument. It is Colossians 2:9. He is not a messenger *from* the transcendent God. He is the transcendent God, made visible, with intrinsic authority over every being that has ever crossed over.

Two descents, and only one of them gives

The counterfeit comes down with power and false signs and wonders, to impress, to deceive, and to redirect worship away from God. It descends in order to *take*. The genuine Son of God came down, was born in a manger, lived a life of service, and laid that life down at a cross. He descended in order to *give*. One comes to be marveled at. One came to be crucified.

Nothing that could be disclosed can un-God Him

One quiet fear sits underneath this subject for many believers: if something were confirmed out there, would our faith survive it? Scripture removes the fear at its root. The image of God is not

a quality like intelligence or capability. It is a *status*, an appointment: humanity was made to represent God and rule on His behalf. A status conferred by God cannot be revoked by an announcement, and the incarnation cannot be relativized by anything found in the sky. Our faith never rested on being the only intelligent beings God ever made. We already knew we were not. It rests on the One who became flesh.

So we raise our heads

“Now when these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

LUKE 21:28 (ESV)

Jesus did not end the Olivet Discourse in fear. He ended it in posture. This is not a survival plan and not a strategy for hiding. It is the bearing of people who recognize the season they are in. The One who told us these things would come is the same One who is coming back, and the enemy knows it. That is precisely why deception intensifies as the hour gets late.

We do not panic, and we do not bow

Whatever is released in the coming months, whatever claims are made, deception will run high. But we are not the people who panic, and we are not the people who bow. Our posture is readiness rather than anxiety, and discernment rather than fascination. We test the spirits. We stand on the Word.

And whatever may yet come down out of the sky, the church has already seen something greater. We have seen the God who crossed over, who was seen and handled, who was crucified, who rose, who ascended in glory, and who is coming back. Deception has no lasting power over people who have looked the Truth in the face. His name is Jesus Christ, and this is why the gates of hell will not prevail against His church.

REFERENCE

Key Terms

- **Phobētra** — Greek, Luke 21:11. The fearful sights or dreadful spectacles themselves, not the emotion. Related to the root behind *phobia*.
- **UFO / UAP** — unidentified flying object; the government's current term is unidentified anomalous phenomena. Both describe the limits of the observer, not the nature of the object.
- **Nachash** — Hebrew, Genesis 3. The serpent of Eden, understood in this series as a divine throne-guardian in rebellion.
- **Metaschēmatisō** — Greek, 2 Corinthians 11:14. To change outward form. *Meta* (change) plus *schēma* (outward appearance).
- **Planaō** — Greek, Matthew 24:4, 5, 11, 24. To lead astray, to wander off the road. The root behind *planet*.
- **Apostasia** — Greek, 2 Thessalonians 2:3. The rebellion or falling away that precedes the day of the Lord.
- **The man of lawlessness** — 2 Thessalonians 2. The coming figure who arrives “by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders.”
- **Strong delusion** — 2 Thessalonians 2:11. Judicial, not arbitrary. It falls on those who first refused to love the truth.
- **Contactee literature** — published accounts from people claiming contact with non-human intelligences, studied here for its *message* rather than its descriptions.
- **Gnosticism** — an ancient rival to the early church teaching a divine spark within, salvation by secret knowledge rather than the cross, and a serpent recast as humanity's liberator.
- **Image of God** — a status and appointment to represent God and rule on His behalf, not a quality such as intelligence. Conferred by God, so no discovery can revoke it.
- **Manifest in the flesh** — 1 Timothy 3:16. The one crossing over unlike every other. “In him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9).

GO DEEPER

Reflection & Discussion

1. Before this study, would you have felt free to bring a question about this subject to church? What made it feel off limits?
2. We drew a firm line between *doctrine* and *application*. Why does holding that line protect us, and where else does that discipline matter?
3. Read Luke 21:11 and 21:28 together. How do you personally move from the first verse to the second when the headlines are strange?

4. What difference does it make to see the two realms as overlapping rather than distant?
5. Ezekiel 1 read as a throne becomes one of the most reassuring chapters in the Old Testament. Where do you need that same assurance?
6. The serpent's opening move was a question. Where have you noticed “Did God really say?” in your own thinking, in a modern costume?
7. What is the practical difference between *knowing* the truth and *loving* it?
8. Which substitutions from the two-column comparison have you already encountered without recognizing them?
9. How can we tell whether familiar Christian vocabulary is still carrying its biblical meaning?
10. Why is a demoted Jesus more dangerous to the church than an absent one?
11. The image of God is a status, not a quality. What fear does that settle for you?
12. What is one specific fear, fascination, or anxiety you can set down this week because of what you now know?

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