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For many UFO buffs, sightings are not a contemporary phenomenon.

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According to them, there's undeniable proof throughout the world that we were visited long ago by beings from outer space.

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These visitors supposedly left permanent traces of their passage here on Earth.

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Were our ancestors' gods actually astronauts from another planet?

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The Earth is a planet that is a part of the Earth's universe.

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The Earth is a planet that is a part of the Earth's universe.

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The Earth is a planet that is a part of the Earth's universe.

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The Earth is a planet that is a part of the Earth's universe.

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The Earth is a planet that is a part of the Earth's universe.

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In the aftermath of World War II, the UFO phenomenon became all the rage in the media.

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At first it was thought that these unidentified flying objects were Russian or American secret weapons.

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Then the public began speculating that they were alien spaceships.

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Apparently these mysterious visitors were concerned over the invention of the atomic bomb.

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Then in the 1960s, popular authors threw a spin in the contemporary timeline of these sightings.

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They explained that aliens had not landed for the first time in 1947, but rather several thousand years earlier.

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Louis Powers, Jean-Bergier, Robert Chauroux, Zechariah Sitchin and especially Eric Von Danikin

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heralded in this new vision of ancient astronauts.

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There's another whole area of interest in UFOs which is usually labeled the ancient astronauts

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and most popularized by the author Eric Von Danikin and in fact actually by a lot of other people even before him.

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He has often happens, he was more the person who brought it to the public than actually created much of that in the first place.

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He certainly extended his researches beyond what a lot of those had done and I'd have to say I think sometimes some of his researches were,

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shall we say a little shaky at times, what he did in real service more than the evidence he put forward was that he brought the subject to the fore

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and he got people interested in it and some of those people did very good research into it.

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Ancient astronaut theory basically says that the, if you like UFO people or some kind of entities visited the Earth many, many years ago

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and were part of the formation of our history. There are many possibilities.

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They could have been the entities that we regarded as our first gods perhaps.

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They could be the origins of the human race. They could be the people who created the human race and so on.

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And ancient astronaut theory certainly looks back on that as that possibility.

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The theory of ancient astronauts, which has a very long history, was first introduced to the public in the 1960s

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when Louis Pauls and Jacques Bergier wrote a book on the subject called *The Morning of the Magicians*, which became a huge success.

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Its success paved the way for other authors, who had been thinking along the same lines.

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And soon, other books began appearing on the market.

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In 1963, French author Robert Charrou wrote a book dedicated solely to the theory of the Magicians.

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And then, in 1968, Swiss author Eric von Daniken wrote Chariots of the Gods, which became a huge international success.

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In the late 1960s, a Swiss author Eric von Daniken wrote a bestseller called Chariots of the Gods,

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which explained how aliens had visited Earth in ancient times and had crafted dozens of famous archaeological relics.

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His theory soon spread throughout the world.

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Well, perhaps a bit less in France, where the same ideas had already been introduced by Robert Charrou.

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When Charrou published his first book on ancient astronauts in 1963, there was a major difference between it and the book written by Pauls and Bergier,

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which had first introduced the idea that perhaps aliens had visited ancient Earth and had created the human race and civilization.

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Charrou took the same theory and provided so-called facts to back it up, such as archaeological monuments and extracts from holy scriptures of different religions.

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His thick book was filled with what he considered to be valid proof of this theory.

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Von Daniken took the same approach. He wanted to show that the human race had been created by extraterrestrial beings.

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His book was filled with facts designed to prove this.

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It was much more of a success than Charrou's because Daniken was able to express himself in very simple terms.

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Whereas Robert Charrou came from a more occult, esoteric background, and tended to use a language level that most people could not understand,

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filled with illusions that were difficult to decipher, unless you came from the same background as he did.

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Von Daniken, on the other hand, used a clear and concise language that the average person could understand.

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But was there any basis to the questions raised by these authors?

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According to them, the Great Pyramid of Keops, found on Egypt's Giza Plateau,

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a true architectural feat could not have been built without extraterrestrial intervention, fact or fantasy.

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If we want to determine whether the Egyptians really built the pyramids themselves,

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or whether they had outside help from extraterrestrials, because they were simply too huge and too complex for the time,

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then I think we need to look at known scientific data.

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We shouldn't stray from known facts and propose wild theories.

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If we look at historical data on how the pyramids were built, how the work was organized,

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and what goals the Egyptians had in mind when they built these monuments,

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then I think the facts speak for themselves.

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Obviously, some of the details are missing, and the more archaeologists investigate,

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the more the answers they find lead to further questioning.

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But we don't need visitors from outer space to explain the existence of the pyramids.

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It's easy to talk about extraterrestrials these days.

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The idea that they exist has been around for a long time.

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But now they're being seen in a different light.

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I personally don't believe all those stories about aliens building pyramids or Mesopotamian temples.

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Explanations were given long ago on how the pyramids were built,

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and they were more complicated than the Mesopotamian temples,

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since the pyramids were made from large stones that had to be carried across great distances.

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The pyramids of Giza were built from stones that may have come from Aswan,

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a village at the other end of the Nile.

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There are still quarries in Aswan where you can see the vestiges of these huge blocks

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that were cut and shipped by barge to the lower end of the Nile to be used in building pyramids.

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The Sumerians, on the other hand, used sun-dried and baked bricks to make their temples,

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which was much easier at the time since there were no stones available in their region.

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There was no stone in the region.

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How and with what were the stone blocks cut out of the quarries?

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How were they transported and joined together to the thousandth of an inch,

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asks Vondanikin in chariots of the gods.

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Vondanikin feels that nothing else can explain how builders overcame the difficulties

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involved in putting together a structure like the Great Pyramid.

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Imagining that the builders placed ten stone blocks per day, each weighing about 15 tons,

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he says that it should have taken 664 years to place the two million plus stones used in its construction.

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The problem is that Vondanikin multiplied the true weight of the stones by ten

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and added an extra 300,000 stones in his calculations.

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Whenever we discuss the building of the Kayops pyramid, or Kufu, as it was known in ancient Egypt,

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the first thing that everyone wants to do, be it students or authors, is to quantify everything.

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How many stone blocks did they use? How were they moved? How long did it take?

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These questions can be answered. On average, the blocks weighed about two and a half tons each.

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They could have been hauled on a wooden sled by a team of 14 to 17 men.

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This calculation was based on the time that it took to haul the two million plus stones that were required

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during the time period that we know the pyramid was built.

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Some blocks were bigger, weighing more than ten tons, but they weren't used as often.

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They serve primarily for what might be considered the roof.

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Naturally, these blocks took longer to move, and more men were required to haul them.

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Apparently, some people prefer to believe that the construction of these extraordinary monuments

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was due to some mysterious intervention rather than human ingenuity, crafting, and patience.

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There's something basic that these people are forgetting,

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and that's the fact that these pyramids and temples were built by thousands of workers,

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at a time when laborers came cheap if not free, and unions were unheard of.

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These days, it's hard to believe that such a huge project could have been designed and built by

humans.

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The pyramids could never be reproduced. They're one of the seven wonders of the world.

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Denying the human aspect of this project merely shows a blatant lack of interest

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in what archaeology or history might be trying to tell us.

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Claiming that a miraculous or mysterious force was behind the project

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is simply taking an easy way out.

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Von Daniken even went so far as to say that the Egyptians had no architectural knowledge.

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He wrote,

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Von Daniken was not the only one who believed in the concept of an instant civilization.

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Practically all proponents of the ancient astronaut theory

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imagined that a super civilization sprang out of nowhere.

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Another example of an instant civilization were the Sumerians.

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Who built their empire in Mesopotamia around the same time that ancient Egypt existed.

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If this concept of an instant civilization seems a bit radical to you,

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perhaps you'll take comfort in knowing that it has not received much support from the scientific community.

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Professor Daniel Purshull, now retired, was a specialist in Mesopotamian archaeology.

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We have to go back to the 5th millennium BC to find the first traces of a culture in Sumer,

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which is now part of southern Iraq, not far from the Persian Gulf, and in Egypt.

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The two largest cultures of the time appeared in this region around 5000 BC.

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We can refer to them as cultures.

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Since archaeological expeditions have found vestiges of a society dating from that time period,

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in terms of architecture, buildings and common everyday items.

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For example, the oldest artifacts found were painted ceramic plates dating from the 5th millennium BC.

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After that archaeologists found statues of the ancient Roman Empire.

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These cultures developed gradually.

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We have artifacts from Sumer and Egypt that predate the time when these societies began to record their history,

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which was around 3200 BC.

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Whereas Vondanikin remained vague about the origin of these ancient visitors from outer space,

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Zecharia Sitchin was quite specific.

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A major archaeology buff, Sitchin wrote an entire series of books about the history of the human race,

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as it relates to aliens in the Earth Chronicles.

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According to him, ancient visitors came from either Marduk or Nibiru, a planet beyond Pluto,

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with an eccentric orbit that brought it close to Earth every 3600 years.

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During one of its passages, the ancient visitors came to the Earth Chronicles,

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and during one of its passages near Earth, the inhabitants of this planet, the Anunnaki,

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made contact with the primitive ancestors of the Sumerians.

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Sitchin also speaks of Sumer as an instant civilization.

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Their shrine was supposedly nothing more than a site for idolizing these visitors from outer space.

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Research into Mesopotamia shows that Sumerians were merely descendants of nomad tribes,

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making them 100% human.

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They came from Asia and Iran, and settled in an area that is now southern Iraq.

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They built city-states like Uruk, Uruk and Lagash, each of which had its own leader.

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At one point, the leader of one city-state decided he wanted to rule the entire region,

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which he more or less succeeded in doing.

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Some city-states were strong and independent, while others were more passive and submissive.

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There were political movements.

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This first Sumerian civilization was invaded and occupied by the Goutis,

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who ruled for a while, but ended up assimilating into the population.

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There was a subversive movement by Sumerians following attacks by King Sargon.

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The Sumerians took the upper hand culturally at least for a very long time,

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and in terms of religious practices, they ruled until the Christian era.

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The Sumerian gods were not created out of thin air.

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They emerged over time as the individual city-states merged into one civilization.

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At first there was divine trinity, consisting of Anne, and Lille, and Ancu.

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Each of these gods had been worshipped by an individual city.

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Eventually, the trinity was replaced by a single god, Marduk.

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The other gods still existed, but Marduk became the main god who was worshipped.

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The other three gods were generally associated with specific sites, or legends.

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Sumerians were similar to Egyptians in the sense that they worshipped several gods at once.

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Sitchin's most radical concept was that of a twelfth planet in our solar system,

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based on the precept that the sun and moon were considered as planets in ancient times.

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Professor Misio Kaku, one of the world's most well-known quantum physicists,

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doubts that any major planet exists past Pluto, the furthest in our solar system.

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Some scientists have speculated that there is a tenth planet, a planet beyond the orbit of Pluto.

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Well, beyond Pluto we have what is called a kuiper belt.

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These are small pieces of debris made out of ice, a cometary belt, too small to form a large planet.

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Also, we realize that if there was a tenth planet, it would cause gravitational disturbances.

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That's how we discovered Neptune.

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Neptune tugs on Uranus, and that's how, by looking at Newton's laws of motion,

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by the power of pure mathematics, we were able to locate the position of a hypothetical planet called Neptune.

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Now, the orbit of Pluto, even though it's eccentric, is calibrated according to Newton's laws of motion.

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We don't see any large perturbations on Pluto's orbit other than the fact that Pluto itself has a moon.

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Given the fact that Pluto has a moon, we can track the trajectory of that two-body system,

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and we see no basic deviation from Newton's laws of motion.

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That's why we don't believe that there is a tenth planet.

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If such a planet had existed, its passage near Earth some 3,000 years ago

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would have had such a major impact that the effects would still be felt today.

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A planet with an eccentric orbit would also be sterile, as explains Pierre Bastien,

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an astrophysicist at the University of Montreal.

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A planet with an orbit also eccentric.

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If a planet existed with such an eccentric orbit, circling the Sun every 3,000 years,

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approaching as close as the Earth is now, then backing off to a distance more than 100 times

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the distance between the Earth and the Sun, otherwise known as 100 astronomical units,

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then such a planet could never develop life forms, certainly not easily.

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Since the conditions required to produce life would be too unstable.

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Most of the time the temperature would be too low for life to evolve.

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Then, for a very brief period of time, a few months perhaps,

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the temperature would rise high enough to melt some of the ice,

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only to drop back down to the freezing point again afterwards.

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These aren't ideal conditions for life to emerge.

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Despite the strong criticism of Sitchin and Vondanikin's speculations,

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the idea that extraterrestrials rank up amongst the gods was not dismissed by everyone as a mere flight of fancy.

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Jean Cazaux has written several books about UFOs.

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He feels that the ancient astronaut theory is the only explanation for mysteries

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found in major religious works, such as the Bible or the Mahabharata.

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The theory of ancient astronauts is fantastic.

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According to the theory, visitors were here before we were, and perhaps we are the visitors.

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Perhaps we were co-creators of the human race.

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I'm not saying that the theory jives with the childish view of the Raaleons,

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who simply put a spin on the stories found in the Bible.

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It's actually quite feasible to imagine that we co-created the human race

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with extraterrestrial beings who came to Earth to assist in human evolution.

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One author who supports this theory is Zacharia Sitchin,

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who points to the Samarian civilization as an example of this intervention.

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Another author who supports it is Lawrence Gardner.

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Personally, I think that it's an incredible theory,

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one that provides answers to a lot of questions that are raised in reading the Bible.

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According to proponents of the ancient astronaut theory,

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the Old Testament abounds with references to these visitors from outer space.

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The cloud that led the Hebrews out of Egypt was supposedly an alien spaceship,

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and the Ark of the Covenant, the golden chest used to carry the Ten Commandments,

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was supposedly a transmitter.

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If you replace the words archangel, angel and yave with more modern words,

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00:22:57,000 --> 00:23:02,000

you will see that the stories in the Bible are quite similar to stories we hear these days.

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Take for instance the time when Yave presents himself to Joshua

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and provides him with strategic plans.

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Yave provides Joshua with military advice, designed to win a battle,

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telling him to advance on the left flank and wait for a noise over the trees,

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which will be Yave arriving, kind of acting like a human and not a god.

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If we look at the story through the eyes of this new theory,

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we see that it was a real person who appeared over the trees,

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someone armed with technological and mental abilities far exceeding anything known

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by the primitive Hebrews who lived two or three thousand years ago.

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If the Bible describes actual events that happened,

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then it's only natural for us to have questions about those events.

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But should the Bible be considered as a history book?

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Nothing is less certain.

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Who wrote the Bible?

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00:23:54,000 --> 00:23:56,000

What was their motivation?

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These are basic questions that we need to ask in order to understand the history of the Bible.

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Robert David of the University of Montreal is an expert on the books of the Old Testament.

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The scriptures were written over a period of approximately one thousand years.

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People in positions of authority had to find a way to carry on their traditions.

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Scribes were charged with recording some of these traditions,

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but who wrote them and when?

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That is what remains at the crux of the controversy.

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For instance, look at the Torah, the first five books of the Bible,

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which were supposedly written by Moses.

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It seems quite clear nowadays that Moses didn't really write those.

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They had to have been written much later.

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There has been some debate over when exactly these books were written,

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but it has been concluded that the Torah, as it appears today, was written somewhere around 500 BC.

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It's estimated that Moses lived somewhere around 1200 to 1250 BC,

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which means that the traditions were carried down verbally for close to 700 years.

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Very little was written down at the time.

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When I say that, we need to keep in mind that these books were not presented as news stories back then.

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There was no such thing as journalism at the time.

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Certain people were charged with writing down the specific objectives of a community,

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which was generally to spread the word that Yahweh was God, the God.

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The books of the Old Testament were written from a certain perspective relating to the Torah,

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and this perspective was continually changing with each author.

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They were not objective.

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In fact, they were quite subjective.

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They were not as their writings pertain to a specific community.

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They were written down to a community of people.

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Objectivity aside, the Old Testament contains passages which raise valid questions.

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For instance, in the first few verses of Genesis in the Hebrew Bible, God is referred to as Elohim,

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a plural noun that can be translated as God's.

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This ambiguity has inspired many supporters of the ancient astronaut theory.

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In the Hebrew scripture, several different words are used to express the concept of God.

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Yahweh is the proper name used, but you can also find the expressions el, Elohim and Eloha.

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I know that the word Elohim is often used by supporters of alien theories,

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with the claim that Elohim means God's.

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So it must mean extraterrestrials.

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The word el is used for God in other languages as well.

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The plural form Elohim is used in two different ways in the Old Testament.

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The Hebrews used the pluralized form of Elohim to refer to gods and divine beings.

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So when the text speaks of foreign gods, such as Canaanite gods, Elohim is used in a pluralized form.

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On the other hand, when the text speaks of the God of Israel, the word Elohim is always used in the singular.

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The suffix him isn't only found in the name Elohim.

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It is also used in two or three other Hebrew words.

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It expresses a concept similar to the royal we conveying the majesty and supremacy of this God.

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That's why the verbs appear in the plural form.

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The scriptures are very clear.

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When the word Elohim is used, the verb form is always in the singular

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when the passage refers to the national God.

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Can we find the same clarity in reference to chariots of the gods?

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To quote Ezekiel chapter 1,

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00:27:47,000 --> 00:27:51,000

In the 30th year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month,

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00:27:51,000 --> 00:27:56,000

as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened,

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00:27:56,000 --> 00:27:58,000

and I saw visions of God.

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00:27:58,000 --> 00:28:01,000

I looked and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north,

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00:28:01,000 --> 00:28:06,000

a great cloud and a fire unfolding itself, and a brightness was about it.

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00:28:06,000 --> 00:28:10,000

And out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures.

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00:28:10,000 --> 00:28:12,000

And this was their appearance.

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00:28:12,000 --> 00:28:17,000

They had the likeness of man, and every one had four faces, and every one had four wings,

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00:28:17,000 --> 00:28:23,000

and their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot.

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Through the eyes of a generation used to the idea of space travel,

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this passage could easily be interpreted as the arrival of a UFO.

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But is Ezekiel's vision so different from others found in the Bible

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that we need to resort to aliens to explain it?

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And what are we to make of Elijah's ascension to heaven in a chariot of fire?

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Was this merely an allegory, or was it really the first alien abduction, as some people claim?

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The whole chariot issue was something altogether different.

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Israelites lived in the mountains in biblical times.

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They obviously don't live there now, but they did back then.

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They didn't own chariots. They fought on foot.

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Their enemies were the ones with the chariots, like the Canaanites, who lived on the plains,

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where it was flat enough for chariots.

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Since the Israelites didn't live on the plains, they didn't have chariots.

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The Egyptians, Canaanites, and Babylonians were the ones with the chariots.

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Chariots were a symbol of power.

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With a chariot, you could travel quickly from one place to another.

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Generally, chariots were used symbolically in the Scriptures.

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And here I'm thinking of Elijah and Elisha, since they were closely linked at the time.

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Elijah fought in the name of Yahweh against Baal, the god of Canaan, and against other pagan gods.

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One way to portray Elijah as a fighter is to put him in a chariot.

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That's how you win against great armies.

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This concept of a chariot of fire came from Deuteronomy.

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Whenever the author of the book of Deuteronomy wants to indicate the presence of God,

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he uses the fire symbol.

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As in, the Lord thy God is a consuming fire.

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It's a universal symbol.

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00:30:04,000 --> 00:30:09,000

If we look at religions throughout the world, we see that fire is a symbol of God.

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00:30:09,000 --> 00:30:13,000

There's a reason why we light candles and burn incense.

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00:30:13,000 --> 00:30:15,000

They are associated with fire.

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So the reason why Elijah is portrayed on a chariot of fire is because he has been fighting in the name of God.

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The story could be interpreted literally.

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But I think the chariot is more symbolic than anything.

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The same applies for Ezekiel.

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The temple was destroyed, and the people were exiled.

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The Bible gave the impression that God lived in the temple.

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So when the temple was destroyed, what became of Yahweh?

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Ezekiel somehow transferred the shekinah, the presence of God, to Babylon.

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How did he manage that?

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The concept of Yahweh was just as imaginary as Baal was to the Canaanites.

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These gods didn't walk on earth.

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00:31:01,000 --> 00:31:03,000

They moved on clouds.

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00:31:03,000 --> 00:31:09,000

One way to transfer the presence of God from the temple to Babylon was on a chariot.

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00:31:09,000 --> 00:31:15,000

It was used as an element of combat once again because he was going up against the Babylonian gods,

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00:31:15,000 --> 00:31:18,000

and he had to invoke God in their community.

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It was strictly symbolic.

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God didn't move around in a rocket.

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At least I don't think so.

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Despite these explanations, the Bible continues to fascinate mystery lovers.

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Each new book written about ancient astronauts

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inevitably contains countless references to the Old Testament.

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This fascination with the Bible is understandable.

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00:31:56,000 --> 00:32:02,000

As a man-made creation, the Bible attests to the incredible history of the human race.

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People are always quoting the Bible because it's a monument of sorts,

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accessible to all as compared to other books that are more difficult to comprehend.

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The Bible is easy to obtain, to read, and to understand to a certain degree.

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There are a few passages that aren't quite clear, but in general it's not hard to understand.

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Quoting the Bible means going back to the foundations of human history,

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looking up the fundamentals in a founding document.

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I think that there is something to be said for the use of biblical references.

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This is true for those seeking aliens in the Bible,

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but it's also true for devout believers who are seeking elements to reflect on.

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If we were to examine the Koran or any other major religious works,

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we would find plenty of material open to interpretation.

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When you start from a certain point of view,

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you can find pretty much whatever you want to support your view

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00:32:58,000 --> 00:33:01,000

if you look in literature throughout the world.

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00:33:02,000 --> 00:33:07,000

I feel that it's important that the Bible is a monumental work that everyone is familiar with

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and that can be easily consulted.

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The problem lies in what people do with the information that they find.

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That will always be the case.

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People will always run into problems if they try to take every story literally,

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because some things just could not have actually happened.

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I'm curious as to why people in search of aliens don't go hunting at the bottom of the sea as well,

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since sea monsters allegedly exist too.

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Does the Loch Ness monster exist?

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It's something to think about.

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There is an imaginary side to the scriptures which prevents us from taking them literally under certain circumstances.

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Just because a serpent spoke to Eve in the Garden of Eden

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00:33:46,000 --> 00:33:50,000

doesn't mean that people go around looking for a talking snake.

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By the same token, why do some people go looking for rockets and Loch Ness monsters in the Bible?

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Because they are taking it literally.

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00:33:58,000 --> 00:34:04,000

There are traps in taking that approach, since the Bible is filled with codes that represent that time period.

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00:34:04,000 --> 00:34:09,000

And it's up to us to study the Bible and find the symbolic meaning behind the scriptures.

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00:34:09,000 --> 00:34:13,000

We imprint certain codes in our modern material as well.

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00:34:13,000 --> 00:34:17,000

I only hope that 3,000 years from now, when they read our material,

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00:34:17,000 --> 00:34:21,000

they won't make the same mistakes that we are making with these 3,000-year-old scriptures.

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00:34:21,000 --> 00:34:27,000

Otherwise, who knows what strange things might be taking place 3,000 years from now?

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I think that's what we will do in 3,000 years.

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Once again, the Bondanican implies that the architects of this culture were bestowed with knowledge from extraterrestrial beings.

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In reality, the Mayans did not have very advanced knowledge.

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Mayan temples were built using very simple mathematical shapes, like the square, the rectangle and the triangle.

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The direction the temples faced depended on the solar system, as they knew it at the time.

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It's easy to jump to the conclusion that these temples are evidence of hidden knowledge.

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But as far as I'm concerned, that would be faulty reasoning.

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I would like to see proof of this mysterious hidden information.

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The proof is spoken of, but never described.

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Conclusions are presumed without facts to back them up.

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The way that the Mayan culture was organized and their day-to-day life did not point to a highly complex society.

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On the contrary, they were barely more than an agricultural society.

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They had a tiered social structure, very centralized, with a religious base spread throughout small villages.

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Compared to other ancient civilizations like the Chinese, Mesopotamians or Egyptians, the Mayan temples are not very impressive.

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They're big, that's true, but from a technological standpoint, they're not very impressive.

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In 1949, archaeologist Alberto Rose Luillet discovered an entrance to the temple of inscriptions in Palenque in the Chiapas jungle.

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Luillet did not get deep inside the temple until the summer of 1952.

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He discovered the tomb of King Bacar, which revolutionized Mayan archaeology and added fuel to the controversy over ancient astronauts.

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The lid of King Bacar sarcophagus was adorned with a scene of a spaceman at the controls of his craft.

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At least that was Eric Vondanikin's interpretation of the stone carving.

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00:37:06,000 --> 00:37:19,000

In Vondanikin's vivid imagination, ornaments such as a kwezow, a feathered serpent, and the god-truck mule became a laser gun, landing gear, and the helm of a spacecraft.

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Archaeologists didn't see anything more than King Bacar on horseback ascending to heaven on a blade of wheat.

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Regardless of what Vondanikin supporters may say, he didn't simply interpret history. He rewrote it completely.

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The ease and total lack of integrity with which he made that claim was incredible.

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He came up with an instant interpretation with no regard whatsoever for the culture or civil rights.

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The designs and geometric shapes of the stone were typical of artwork found elsewhere during that period.

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With an active imagination, these designs could be perceived as anything.

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00:37:59,000 --> 00:38:11,000

In the 18th century, they might have appeared as a galley, whereas during the rule of the pharaohs, they might have appeared as symbols representing horrors or satan.

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00:38:11,000 --> 00:38:20,000

So you see, this scene could be interpreted in whatever manner the viewer wishes, but it's a different manner altogether to jump to conclusions and totally disregard all other information known about this culture.

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He tried to make a case where there was none. I could just as easily make up something about a subject that interests me.

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Around 900 A.D., the Mayans deserted their large cities in Yucatan, and the city of Yucatan.

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The city of Yucatan and the Chapa's jungle and headed south, leaving behind the temples and pyramids.

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Von Däniken claimed that this mass exodus was the result of unfulfilled contact with aliens. The

gods from outer space had missed an important rendezvous.

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Did the author really think that the Mayans' behavior was unique?

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Just as humans must eventually die, so too civilizations must eventually come to an end. The disappearance of the Mayans is not unique in the annals of history.

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There were other disappearances as well.

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For instance, some species of animals disappeared, and also other civilizations, like the Samarians, whose civilization crumbled at the end of the third millennium.

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As for the Mayans, given their geographical location and the information we can deduce about their civilization, it seems most likely that their culture crumbled after a series of poor crops, drought and unstable weather conditions.

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We tend to think that civilizations go on forever, and if they end, it's because of an external force.

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00:40:03,000 --> 00:40:13,000

As a civilization crumbles, we may see economic problems, social upheaval, and desertion of villages.

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Sometime around the year 1300 BC, the cities of Canaan were also abandoned, following a major economic crisis.

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Canaanites went back to a nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life, so the abandoned Mayan villages were not unique.

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To supporters of the ancient astronaut theory, nothing proves their case more than the Nazca lines in Peru.

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It is estimated that these huge figures were drawn by Nazca Indians between 500 and 1000 AD.

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The drawings are so large that they were not discovered until the 20th century, when pilots flew over the Nazca plain.

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The fact that they can only be seen completely from above has led some authors to speculate as to why they were drawn.

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00:41:09,000 --> 00:41:13,000

What if they were markers or landing strips for gods?

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We know that mathematically and geometrically, it's relatively easy to build a straight line over a very long distance.

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We've seen it done here in this area, and also in the southwest United States, where highways were built in a straight line between cities,

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00:41:39,000 --> 00:41:45,000

passing over hills and valleys, using markers such as sticks and fires.

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00:41:48,000 --> 00:41:55,000

The Romans measured land as they built their famous roads, without the assistance of aliens.

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Even though archaeologists have now solved most of the mysteries raised by Eric von Daniken and those who followed in his footsteps,

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it would be foolish to think that scientists have all of the answers.

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History has quite a few gray areas that lend themselves to speculation and interpretation.

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Obviously, there have been gray areas where questions have been raised and we've been unable to find the answer through archaeology or ancient writings.

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There are still some gaps in our history, but over time, these are being filled in.

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The question is, how do we find the answer to the question?

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There are still some gaps in our history, but over time, these are being filled in, as we make new discoveries and come across ancient documents that have not been previously studied.

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As they are studied, they address questions that had previously gone unanswered.

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But we don't need to call in visitors from another world to fill in the blanks.

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There's no problem here on Earth that requires the intervention of outside forces.

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At least I haven't seen any up until now, and I'm very open-minded.

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I would be very happy to learn that we have made initial contact with an alien civilization.

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I think that would be fantastic.

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But if the arguments proposed by Von Daniken and Sitchin don't hold water, then why is the ancient astronaut theory still so popular?

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Spending hours and hours with your nose buried in old documents, doing serious research to find out what happened in the past and what objects were used for is not very exciting work.

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On the other hand, writing a novel filled with fanciful and mysterious ideas, that's a lot more exciting.

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It has an element of suspense. There's not much suspense in history books, but there's plenty of suspense in those novels.

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Oddly enough, and in spite of weak arguments to support the ancient astronaut theory,

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the prospects of a past contact with aliens has led generations of readers to become interested in ancient civilizations.

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Without this suspense found in books by Von Daniken and others following in his footsteps,

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these mystery lovers would never have discovered the Sumerians, the Mayans, or the Naska Indians.

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Eric Von Daniken is without a doubt a lousy archaeologist, but interestingly enough,

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his theories have forced historians to join the debate and explain their material in layman's terms.

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If it weren't for aliens, these men of science probably wouldn't have stepped down from their ivory tower.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.

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The Sumerians are the only ones who have the same theory of the Sumerians.