

The Bible (Unmuted) Transcript
Episode 37
Are We Alone in the Universe w/ Dr. Paul Thigpen
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Teacher: Matthew Halsted

Episode Summary:

Matt is joined by Dr. Paul Thigpen, the author of *Extraterrestrial Intelligence and the Catholic Faith: Are We Alone in the Universe with God and the Angels?* Matt and Paul discuss some of the biblical and theological issues that might come up if we were to discover extraterrestrial existence. For example, what sort of ontological status would ETs have? Would they be with or without sin? Or a mix of both? And if ETs were sinful, how might God redeem them?

As a historical theologian, Dr. Thigpen invites listeners to hear the wisdom of the Christian tradition. He believes the theologians of the past can lend invaluable insights for this topic. And in this vein, he leads us back to some of the church's greatest thinkers: From Jerome to Augustine to Aquinas to the celebrated Christian apologist of the last century, namely, C.S. Lewis -- each of these giants of the faith can, arguably, help us ponder the ET question.

About Paul Thigpen:

Paul is the author of 60 books, as well as a graduate from Yale University in religious studies. He also has an MA and PhD in historical theology from Emory University. In addition to having been appointed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to their National Advisory Council, Paul has also served the church in a variety of capacities, including as a university professor, historian, apologist, catechist, and musician.

Purchase Paul's book: <https://www.amazon.com/Extraterrestrial-Intelligence-Catholic-Faith-Universe/dp/1505120136>

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Pre-order Matt's newest book, *The End of the World As You Know It*. You can purchase through (1) Amazon or (2) Lexham Press (as well as other outlets).

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Transcript:

0:00 Hey friends. Welcome back to another episode of the Bible Unmuted. Today we are joined by Dr Paul Thigpen, who recently wrote a book called *Extraterrestrial Intelligence and the Catholic Faith: Are We Alone in the Universe with God and the Angels?* On today's episode, we discussed some of the biblical and theological issues that might come up if we were to discover extraterrestrial existence. What sort of ontological status would ETs have? Would they be with or without sin, or perhaps a mix of both? And if ETs were sinful, how might God redeem them? As a historical theologian, Paul Thigpen takes us back to the Christian tradition. Can the churches theologians of previous era's lend insights into these and related questions? He thinks they can. And in this vein, he invites into the conversation some of the church's greatest thinkers, such as St Jerome, St Augustine, and St Thomas Aquinas and the celebrated Christian apologist of the last century, namely C.S. Lewis. Dr Thigpen is the author of 60 books as well as a graduate of Yale University in Religious Studies. He also has an MA and Ph.D. in Historical Theology from Emory University. In addition to having been appointed by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to their National Advisory Council, Paul has also served the church in a variety of capacities, including as a university professor, historian, apologist, catechist, and musician. So without further ado, let's get straight to the conversation with the one and the only Dr. Paul Thigpen.

1:35 MH Well, hey everybody. I'm excited to be here with my good friend, Dr. Paul Thigpen. How's it going? Man, thanks for coming.

PT Thanks for the invitation. Really, really glad to be here. Thank you.

MH You've written 60 books. Is this number 60 or is it 59? I can't.. I'm not sure.

PT It's 59. I've had one since then.

MH You've had one since then. Okay, good. So, yeah, this book is interesting. A friend of mine mentioned it to me, and that's how when I was looking into it, you and I had met. And as soon as I saw the title and an interview you did, I thought this is a really fascinating book. So I picked it up, couldn't put it down, it's really, really fun. But tell us a little bit about this book. Like, why did you write it? Who was it written to? And just kind of give us the genesis of the book. How did it get started?

PT Sure. I've been interested in the topic since I was a kid. So all the way back to, for folks who are familiar with the subject of UFOs, there were things being published about that back in the 60s when I was in elementary school and then high school. So I've had an interest in that. I was actually an atheist for 12 years. From the age of 12 I became an atheist and came back to faith at the age of 18. And eventually was a pastor, actually. When I came back to faith, I began asking myself, okay, if it could be possible that there's intelligent life on other planets, how would that fit into the Christian faith? Because my faith is the final thing, it is the most important thing; I would have to be able to fit that into my faith. And then I kind of wrestled with that for years. And then became Catholic some years later. And then entered into a whole even bigger pool, so to speak, of teaching and historical insight that I could use to begin to wrestle with those issues. And then finally in first in 2017, and then 2019, there were some articles in the New York Times that kind of were about past articles at the time, suggesting that even though the US government had denied for years that it had any interest in Unidentified Aerial Phenomenon that they had actually did have a secret programs looking at. There was a lot of serious stuff going on. And I began thinking about it again and I thought, you know one thing I do know is that there are a lot of Christians who say, this can't be... it's contrary to the Christian faith. That there can't be any other intelligent creatures out there. And enemies of Christian faith and critics who said, yep you're right, and if it's ever demonstrated that they are there, it's going to disprove your religion. And I got to thinking about that and said, okay what if we are in the edge of discovering some kind of revelation? Christians need to be armed; I mean Catholics and other Christians, with a deep understanding of what the Christian tradition actually says about this, and what it doesn't say about this. And be prepared to respond if someone says to you, "well, we just found out they're out there, that disproves your religion." To be able to come back and say, "actually not." You know, this is a conversation that's been in Christian community for centuries, long centuries and it's been thought about deeply before. It's something that can be accommodated by our tradition without being unfaithful to that tradition and its sources, the same way we accommodated it when science helped us see that the earth was not the center of the solar system in the universe. That was just... it had never really been a part officially of Christian teaching. And so we got the place of saying, "yep, we thought it was." And it was through the influence of folks like Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, that people just assumed we were at the center. That was his model, his cosmology, but once they realized no we're not and science was showing us that, they were able to say, you know what, that's not really, and never has been part of the Christian tradition. We can accommodate them. So you know in some ways an apologetics book, I guess. But also, so two audiences. One primarily Christian, especially Catholics because as a Catholic, I look a lot at Catholic figures and beliefs, but also a lot of Protestant figures and teaching as well. But so the first audience is to Christians to say, look if this is demonstrated, it's not a threat to our faith. It's really not. Here's how earlier Christians were able to deal with these issues. But second, I hope that maybe reading over their shoulder, might be some non-Christians who also think it would disprove our faith, who might look at this and realize, you know it really wouldn't disprove the Christian faith. Maybe the Christian faith is something richer, and deeper, and wider, and , and more complex than I ever realized; I should look into this.

6:23 MH That's really good. There's a great line in your book. I was going to just read it real quick, because I thought it was really, really good, and it was actually really funny. You said, this is at the very beginning. I guess part of the introduction. Page 2 it says, you say,

"I was warned that certain segments of our contemporary society, particularly the academic world, might label me eccentric for writing about this topic. Yet, those who hand out such labels must not be aware that in the light of history, such a dismissive attitude is itself revealed to be eccentric, an aberration, an anomaly. In fact, some of the best minds of the last 25 centuries in western civilization, philosophers, theologians, scientists, literary figures, have energetically and sincerely engaged this topic. To those who would award me a tinfoil hat, I simply reply that you will need many more such hats, for democratists, Plato and Aristotle, Origen, Athanasius, and Augustine, Albert, Aquinas..."

And you just go on and on with all these names. I thought that was a really good line. And so just a quick question. Have you had people say, what in the world are you writing? Why are you writing this on this topic? Or has the response been just overwhelmingly positive in that vein?

PT Ohh, it's a mix. That's for sure. Funny thing. When I was first writing it, since I've been constantly writing for probably 40 years now, people when they haven't seen me in a while, they'll always asked first, "What are you writing these days, Paul?" And so when I was working on this topic, especially if you know, if they were Christians and I knew there might be some sort of concerns, I'd have to kind of size them up for a minute and say, "OK, how old is this guy? And how old is my friend here?" (and sometimes just acquaintances), because the funny thing is that if they were 40 and older, usually when I said I'm writing about extraterrestrial intelligence and the Catholic faith and the Christian faith, they would reply... through 40 and older, they would reply, "Why would you write about that?" And I was on the Catholic radio station talking about it one time. But, you know, where the callers called him and said, "why would a Catholic or any Christian radio station be talking about this subject?" So this is totally off their radar. But The funny thing is that, you know, if they were under 40, almost always as soon as soon as I said, I'm writing about extraterrestrial intelligence and the Christian faith, they would say, "when can I buy the book?" (laughing) So you have this kind of demographic line of older and younger readers. But you have some folks and you know I take that concern seriously, they would say, it's all lies of the government, or that it's some folks saying it's all demons, all demonic. And by writing this book, even opening up the possibility of there being extraterrestrial intelligence is leading people to hell. So you know we have that kind of strong reaction too.

9:25 MH It's interesting. In my opinion I think this is a topic that that everybody should be interested in. Like if you're interested in Christian theology and the Christian tradition, you should be interested in this topic. And the reason I say this because this topic is important for understanding the Christian tradition and Christian theology. And the reason I say that is because you know, regardless if ET is real... you know, let's say, let's say it is, then...then this is a book, and these types of discussions need to happen for obvious reasons. But even if it's not real, these types of discussions should still happen for the simple reason of getting to know our theology better, because we can have thought experiments. We can engage in these thought experiments that, in a sense, see how far our theology can stretch without breaking. Because I think a lot of people have this idea that, you know, some of our Christian doctrines, they're so flimsy. They're so delicate that

they can break so quickly. And then there's lots of Christians out there who say, "Oh, if we discover ET existence, then that's the end of the Christian faith," or something like that. And there's no... that would be a problem for the Christian faith. Well, by engaging in this discussion, we're able to see that no, our theology is... it can actually stretch quite well and accommodate so many of these different ideas. If even if there aren't ET, it still helps us to see how our theology works of, say, the incarnation or, you know, whatever, whatever the question is, is it, does that resonate with you? Does that make....

11:07 PT Oh, that's been my experience, completely. It's, first of all, I want to say what we're talking about, like when I use the word, "we can accommodate that with our theology", it doesn't mean we would do so and somehow contradict the tradition, or deny the tradition. What I found, because I'm a very traditional person, but I found that as I looked at the 2000-year tradition, it affirmed this possibility. It did not go against it. And so I've had traditionalists saying, "how can you think that?" I say, well, go back and look at the folks in my book. My field is historical theology. That means that when I want to talk about theology, I don't just look at the present conversation, the theologians and that kind of thing. I look at the historical conversation about theological ideas all the way back to the beginning and forward, or at least as early as they arise. And what I've learned...you know one of the reasons I chose that as my field, rather than just to get a degree in theology, is that I found that history is so important, that way, that we are likely to forget a lot of things as we're doing theology if we don't know the history of the doctrine. And so in writing about this, but it was amazing how it refreshed my understanding of things, things I hadn't thought about, you know, since grad school many years ago. And pressed me to think more deeply about things, things like, what is the image of God? You know, what is the incarnation? In some of them I began to see a few of the Christian writers out there who were, I'd say, a little Maverick in their theology. We'll put it that way. And in talking about this, they begin, for instance, to talk about an incarnation, perhaps, of God and another planet, which I think could happen and we could talk about that. But that they were mistakenly falling into what was called the Nestorian Heresy. Where back in the ancient christological controversies long time ago. Or that they were falling into the Apollinarian mistake of all these theological issues that have been settled by the church long before it's the Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, have been settled by the church and very deeply reasoned, and thought out, and affirmed. That it so oppressed me to go back and look at all these things again and say, "you know, actually, if you think that, that's actually kind of historian way of thinking about who Christ is." He is not a person, a human person joined to divine person. He is a divine person who took on a human nature. There's a huge difference there, for instance. Or even the rule in the Apollinarian controversy that someone had the idea that when the son of God became a man, he only took on part of human nature. So, he took on a human body in what they would call the lower soul, the part that animates her body at the higher part of the soul of a rational intellect, was replaced by the word of God. And, you know, the church came back and said, "no, that can't work because it's not a true incarnation. There's so much that would be left out." And it was a beautiful principle that whatever has not been assumed, or whatever God has not taken in our nature, joined to himself in order to heal it, whatever was not assumed was not healed. And it had to be full human nature. And in practical terms, that means that he had to have a man. He had to be a man and have a human nature that included our highest intellect and our memory and our conscience, our feelings, all those things had to be part of it in order for him to redeem and heal that in us. And that comes into play when you start talking about some of these issues. So I'm just

giving a couple of examples. But boy, it pressed me to go back to those deep theological roots to think about, you know, some of the platitude you hear about everything's like, well, to be an image of God is to have a rational intellect and a free will. Yes, but there's, you know, there's more. It's kind of inherent in that definition for some people, but that the soul in order to be the image of God has to be immortal and reflect God's immortality. That's the full image of God. So immortality is another aspect of that. And that becomes important when you start talking about life on other planets.

I think I'm rattling on too much. But I'm just giving an example of how deeply it pressed me back into theology. Gosh, I just had a, I won't say his name, but an email this morning from a person who's head of an astronomy department at one of the Ivy League schools who said he read the book and how it really convinced him how important this conversation is to have whether we have evidence of it, you know, of ETI or not. But it's just important for us for the reasons we're talking about. And it so encouraged me, you know, to know there are people will see it way, because that's certainly my intention.

16:10 MH What are some of those issues that come up in this topic that might be a concern to people, or that might raise questions? So if the president comes out tomorrow and says, guys, we are not alone. You know, the rumors are true. We have found extraterrestrial, intelligent life. And so, you know, the next hour after that, what are the theologians going to be talking about? And, and what are the philosophers going to be talking about in terms of... well, what do you think is one of the most pressing questions that will come, you know, an hour after?

(mixed dialogue banter)

PT I will say, I hope they will have read my book if that happens. (Laughing) Because that's the thing I'm really, I mean, very carefully weigh out.... (crosstalk)

MH So, if anybody knows the President, we need to give him a book (laughing). Have any contact?

PT Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm going to touch as many other people as I can. Some congressmen, some others. But because I'm really about, you know, the main point of my book is that the possibility of this is not contrary to the Christian faith, specifically the Catholic faith; that our tradition shows that we really are open to these possibilities. In the case of the Catholic Church also, to say that it has never spoken authoritatively, definitively on this subject. And that's one of the things you're going to run into. And I am running into now. People will say, "Oh no, you know, Catholic Church and Christian tradition denies their existence." And they'll have a few quotes from the catechism of the Catholic Church, which are taken out of context. If you read the rest of the context, it's not only talking about that. And I go through all that in my book. So that's one of the first things is that if there are people who have been convinced, and there are a lot of them apparently right now, that this is contrary to the faith, that they cannot exist; either, they will be pressed either to change their opinion, or to say it's all demons and be terrified, or to say it's all government lie, this is a hologram. You probably heard that before, a hologram they're going to show on the White House lawn or something that people think it is a real craft. And those will be their options. And they're not...except for the first one,

to reconsider what they've thought. They are not very good options. How do you prove that it's some kind of hologram? How do you prove that it's all demons?

So that's one of the issues. Another would be dealing with folks who are not Christian, but think the same way, and would say, "Hey, this disproves your religion." And this goes way back. Thomas Paine, probably a lot of your viewers would remember that name, he wrote *The Age of Reason* and some other things. He was a British pamphleteer, but his pamphlets helped to the American Revolutionary cause. But he wrote a lot of things. He was an atheist. And a strong, strong opponent of Christian faith. And in one of his books he wrote an entire section on why he believed Extraterrestrial Intelligence was true, and why therefore that disproved the Christian thing. So you've had people like him and others just, you know, (inaudible) could say that.

So that would be the next issue then, to help those people see that really, you know, the Christians were able to accommodate the Copernican Revolution when we find out, found out that the Earth was not the center of the solar system with everything revolving around it. In fact, the people began to realize, "you know what? That whole notion, isn't Christian at all." It's not biblical. It came from...not just through Thomas Aquinas and others, but from Aristotle, a pagan philosopher. And they had such dominance in the culture. And I love Aquinas and I'm not putting him down, but I'm saying it wasn't just theologians and church leaders who injected to Galileo when he was arguing, it was also the scientist of the day, it was also the philosophers of the day. They all thought that was true because of the influence of Aristotle. And once the science said, nope, you just look through the telescope, it's not true. People began to say, "Well, you know what? It really wasn't part of the Christian faith was it? I just thought it was. I perceived it to be part of the Christian faith, but it's not at all." This doesn't change anything about God or about the incarnation of the Trinity, or all the other things, even the authority of scripture. That that's happened... That kind of thing has happened before and it can happen again. I think you may have said it yourself one time, to me.

You know, what I have found is that my book is about this: that it's not so much that the Christian faith would be disproved by the discovery of Extraterrestrial Intelligence, but that a lot of Christians perceived it that way. And if they do, they're going to be in panic or denial or something, if it ever is repealed. But you have other questions, of course, to come up right away. So, Okay, even if I can accept, you know, the reality that the Christian faith can do this, where do they fit into things? And a lot of questions we would just, if you're actually in communication with them, that's not a given in all kinds of things....

21:16 MH If I can interrupt real quick. Just pause your thought because I want you to continue, but I just want everybody to know that this is not something that, you know, Dr. Thigpen thinks is important, or myself, or whoever. This is actually something that the Brookings Institute in the early 60s discussed. In the early 60s they had written a piece, and you can find this online, that they said, if ET existence were disclosed, if it did come out, if that we weren't alone, then there could be ramifications with respect to a person's religion. And I think that's an important point, is like these have been discussions that have been going on for like 60 years among policy makers. And, you know, and just trying to think through it. And those were questions that were important in the 60s I think, because, yeah, the Apollo program and space exploration and new things were happening, new things were being discovered. So I think, it's just important to know that that these are questions that

predate even 2017, the 2017 New York Times article. These are questions that were super important to very important people. And so, yeah, so continue your thought on that. I just wanted to mention the Brookings Institute article. And folks can find that at Brookings.Edu. You can find a little piece. I think it was from 1960 or '61? I can't remember....

PT It's 1960 and it was actually a report to NASA that had been conditioned to talk about a whole bunch of things. But the last section was on that. And they tried to compare it to, OK, what happened to Aztec religion when they encountered the Europeans with a superior technology. That kind of thing.

And like I said, I mean, one of the reasons to look at the history is that you find out all the way back to the ancient Greeks, people are already dealing with that possibility and what it might mean. So it's not just an idea. And it's certainly not just my idea that our faith can accommodate it. Again, you've got all kinds of great thinkers Protestant and Catholic both, who have said, yeah its possible. And the ones who didn't or earlier ones who didn't, almost always didn't because they were subject to Aristotle's cosmology. That they had this notion that there's only one, can only be one universe, one world, and the Earth has to be the center of it. They had no notions of planets as rocky, you know, bodies out there. So they said that we've got to be the only ones because it's how the universes built. And they would have arguments like in philosophy that it's more perfect to have only one world instead of two inhabit worlds, because that would be redundant. And we all know that that's not wise. As opposed to something like G.K. Chesterton, the great British Christian writer who talked about this issue. But he's saying, look at 1000 Dandelions out there that God has made. Is he being redundant by making more than one? He said, "it's good. In fact, I think I'm going to do it again." It's God like a child saying, "Encore!" So anyway, it was mostly under the influence of that. But even... and here's the interesting thing, even under the influence of Aristotle himself and others who, you know, thought about such things, thought that the stars (again, they have no concept of planets. So they would wouldn't have any place to have inhabitants in it), but some of them thought that the stars might actually be animated creatures, creatures with souls. That the whatever we saw moving was the body, and they were being moved around by souls. Technically that would be Extraterrestrial Intelligence. But [inaudible] of the kind of would fit into Aristotle's model. And he even, Aristotle himself, kind of played around with the idea that maybe there could be life on the moon. So it's not a strict thing. But under his influence, most people just kind of dismissed it. But once we began to realize what planets were, what the stars were, I mean, it was only recently we're able to prove that they were planets in other solar systems. Over 5000 now we've been able to identify and there'll be so many more. And many of them could very well have an inhabitable zone with their stars that kind of thing. So you know, those have been the kinds of things that people would have to ask about.

25:41 The whole thing, about it being all demons, I think is really important. It should have a lot of people just saying that right away. And they already have - don't believe anybody that tells you that they exist. First of all that's an absolute statement that cannot be proven. That every case of UFO encounter or whatever has to be demonic. Again, when they try to base that on Christian teaching, it doesn't fit. I know the Catholic Church has never taught that. I don't think any denomination that is a Protestant denomination has ever taught that officially. But it's an absolute statement and I agree that there's some accounts given of so-called abductions, alien abductions, that when you read them they sure sound

a lot like the classic descriptions of diabolical encounters. I have no problem with saying some of those possibly could be demonic things that are masquerading as aliens, but you can't jump from that to saying therefore it's all that. That's a big jump and is not logical. I think there could be multiple things going on, you know, that and other stuff as well.

So those are the kinds of things. We would also have to start asking questions, if we could communicate with them. That's the thing. If the president comes on and says yes they exist, and yes we've actually encountered and collaborated with them, like a recent whistleblower from the intelligence committee community claimed. That we've actually had collaborations with these things. And if that's the case, then that would mean somehow we can communicate, however that would come about. And if so, then I have 100 questions I want to ask, you know. First question I would probably ask is something like, so what do you believe about how everything came to be? You know, look around at all this stuff. Where did it come from? How did it come from? And that right away would begin to get you at the notion of a God, or not a notion of a God. And one of the things we have to be careful about is that there's some people who firmly believe that ETI exists. But they have what's been called the Messianic myth about them. That when they come here they're going to come here to save us. That if they've survived as long as it would take for them to have that superior technology, then they must have overcome war and conflict and stuff, and now they have a superior way of life that they will teach us. The Heaven's Gate Cult probably had some similar ideas. The one that you know, committed that suicide. So you have to be careful of that. Even if I were talking to alien and he had this superior technology, and he said to me, ohh no there's nothing like a god existing. I would say, oh we've got to talk then.

MH But it's interesting. It's interesting because I guess if that would happen, that wouldn't qualify that it's a demon because we have a lot of humans who say stuff like that.

PH Exactly.

MH You know. It just means that they're wrong, you know. What do you think about in terms of Christian theology, like, what about the image of God? Like, what status do you think an extraterrestrial being might have in in God's economy?

28:50 PT Well, yeah, I spend a good part of the book talking about that. What I distinguish first is their spiritual status, their relationship to God. And their moral status. The spiritual status, I think, and again, my book is about a lot of possibilities that I think Christian theology allows for without saying it's got to be this way. But spiritual status, you would have things like, are they in the image of God or not. Might you have something, say if we got to another planet and we found things more like dolphins, or something like that. That's not really image of God as we understand it, but still have some level of intelligence. But even if we found creatures, I like to call them that in this discussion, people speak of his beings or entities, I emphasize the word creatures, because that means they have a creator; and that's the basic thing we've got to remember. If they are there, then God created them. You might run into creatures who do have a high-level intellect and a free will and that kind of thing, but their souls are not immortal. They weren't created to live forever with God. They were just created to have a good life in this universe, and when it's done, it's complete. That seems to me to be a possibility.

There's some who claim that a soul by its nature of an intelligent being cannot die, it has to be immortal. I would say that human souls are immortal. That's at least in the Catholic tradition that's a given from Catholic teaching. But that the argument that's given about that is, well, a soul is a simple substance and so it doesn't have constituent parts. And when something dies, it corrodes into its constituent parts, so the soul has to last forever. I'd say no, that doesn't follow at all. We all believe that God holds everything in existence. He's not just the creator. He's the sustainer of everything. And it's only by his grace every moment to moment that something stays in existence. And if he ever once forgot it so to speak, or withdrew his grace, it would cease to exist. That's the kind of death it could be with the soul. If he just didn't intend for it to have an eternity. So perhaps he'd have creatures like that, but perhaps he would have creatures that in some way or in the image of God, that they have free will, rational intellect, and their souls are actually immortal spirits. They're intended to be with God forever; that they're intended for the beauty of creation, as we are. So you can have, you know, multiple possibilities like that.

But then you get to the what I call the mortal status. So what is their relationship to God in the sense of, is it fallen or is it unfallen? And there are a lot of folks out there who think that because of evolution or whatever, anything that's intelligent, free will is going to end up fallen like we are. It's just a given. But certainly The Catholics don't teach that, and I don't think most of the Christian tradition teaches that because we're taught that our first parents had free will and they made a choice. I don't think anybody wants to say that they were doomed, destined from the beginning to fall. I hope no one would say that. It would take away the whole notion of any kind of free will. I know people debate the nature of free will.

I think there could be, and you look at wonderful Christian writers like C.S. Lewis his wonderful *Space Trilogy* looks at these possibilities. So this first planet that they go to its Mars, they call it Malacandra. Some of the creatures that the protagonist of the story meets are the kind I just mentioned, that they have the free will and the intellect and they have a natural knowledge of God, but when they die, that's it. In his, and I won't give away too much, but the second book in this series *Pearlandra*, they encounter something fully in the image of God, more like we are.

But Lewis also did some nonfiction writing. It was wonderful about this topic, probably more than any other Christian theologians in the period. And he says what if what if we have some that are unfallen? And that's what you have in his second book where they haven't fallen, it's still a potential. What if they actually passed the test in the way our first parents didn't? And they're an unfallen race like the angels who didn't fall. What if, on the other hand, God creates them so that instead of there being a human solidarity, so that if the first parents fall gets passed on, (what we call original sin) they are created so that each individual creature has its own test and chooses God, or chooses against God, so that the race would be mixed the same way. And we know that's a possibility because we know the angels are, right? Some are fallen, some unfallen, and they stay that way. You can encounter a mixed race, and then you can also encounter a fallen race.

And that's part of what you were saying a while ago... even if we were talking to Extraterrestrials and said , Oh no, there's no God, that doesn't prove anything. It certainly doesn't prove they are demonic. It proves that they are fallen, at least in their knowledge. Limited. So those are some of the possibilities you get. Lewis has this scary idea. He said,

what if do have some creatures that have fallen? They've already had their test and like the demons now, they can't be redeemed, but they have bodies. They're embodied. What would it be like when you meet them? It would be like meeting embodied demons. What a terrible, I think, thing to actually discover. But that wouldn't disprove God or disprove our faith. It would just mean there are other creatures more powerful than us who made a terrible choice. And that's already happened at least once we know of with the angels.

34:30 MH Yeah, that's interesting. So just in terms of their ontological status, there's multiple options. So, as soon as you hear, if we hear, it is true that ET do exist; you know, if we get that announcement that ET exists, so now we have to do some homework. Like, what sort of existence do they have? And so what you're saying is that the Christian tradition has multiple options here that they could be fallen. They could, some of them, could be fallen, some could not be fallen, like the angels. And others could be in a state of innocence, where they, they've not fallen. And maybe they're in a pre-fallen state. Maybe they're going to fall, but they haven't fallen yet. Or maybe they've already made the decision, and they've decided not to fall, you know. And they're sealed in that decision. Or maybe there's multiple decisions to be made. So the point is that the Christian tradition seems to be able to account for it, theologically speaking, at least.

PT Yeah. We know lots of things about how it is for humans. We know that we're fallen. We know all kinds of things. And we know about angels, certain things.

MH Yeah,

PT But we haven't been told about the other things, if they exist. And if so... and that's another thing that I should mention, you know, for centuries people said, they're not in the Bible. Aliens aren't in the Bible, so they can't be true, they can't exist. And that's, you know, I'm thinking in a simple way kind of dealt with. Microbes aren't in the Bible either, nor are duck bill platypuses, or molecules, or any of that. The Bible is not intended to be an extensive scientific textbook that tells us about everything that exists. So the question is, would their existence then be contrary to any part of revelation from God? And when my book insists on, and what a lot of Christian things insist on for centuries is, no, it doesn't contradict. It would just open up some more possibilities for them. And then at least to the question of what if it turns out they seem to be in the image of God, they are fallen, they need a redeemer... and that's another possibility, is that God might redeem them on their planet in a different way from what he's done with us, especially if they didn't have Adam and Eve like we did, you know, first parents....

MH Yeah, I'm curious to go there. Let's talk about, like, let's suppose that they are fallen, how might God redeem them? I mean, Aquinas seems to think that multiple incarnations are in theory possible. He also says that it wasn't necessary in a logical sense that God redeem us by way of incarnation. So there are multiple options. Could you tease some of that a little bit? Like, what would the options be? And even going back to what you said earlier, at the very beginning about the incarnation and what the incarnation actually was, versus what people mistakenly think about. How would God incarnate himself into another species and yet...what does that do to the status of Jesus of Nazareth?

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38:55 PT And it gets into deep theology there.

MH Yeah.

PT You look at these things and they've pressed me to go back to the early christological controversies. But at least as the...I'll say the Catholic church, but it was, it was the Universal Church up until the splits that came much later, centuries later. So everyone, you know, in the West and the East, there were some small [inaudible] groups. But their understanding of the incarnation. And this is something I didn't even really fully understand, [inaudible] or truly understood in some way, until grad school that when the son of God became a man, he did not choose a man and then join himself through that man, so that there were actually two persons inside Jesus Christ...the divine, what I call the committee Jesus, where he's going to act and the and the divine Jesus says, "well human Jesus, what do you think?", "I don't know. What do you think we should know?" There weren't two persons going on inside of him. There was a single person, the divine son of God. He was the person. He had existed from before all time because he's the eternal Trinity. But he took to himself the technical term theology, *assumed*, took to himself everything it is to be genuinely human. And you have to specify, without sin. And why without sin? Well, because sin is actually a defect in humanity. He took on perfect humanity, which is the way it was intended to be. So when we say, "oh, it's only human, you know, to sin," no, actually it's contrary to human nature to sin. We weren't made to be like that. That's our common condition in it. But someone who is perfectly human wouldn't sin, and so we become less and less sinners the more we conform to his perfect image. So in the incarnation that he took everything that it was to be human, truly human, to himself and joined it to his divine nature so it became his. It's no longer external to him. He actually joined it to his human nature. And again, this doesn't mean that he's just chose a man and said, "I'm going to indwell that man." As

the church pointed out, that would just be an exaggerated version of the Holy Spirit coming on a prophet. They are not really the same person; they just dwell somehow inside the same body. So given that then, we have to realize, and St. Thomas Aquinas talked about this, that it's not inherently contradictory for God to take on a second created nature. He's God, he can do it. He could take on human nature and then the very same person take on a second nature somewhere. It would not be two Jesus', two Christs. It would be the same son of God with different natures joined to himself. And what we have to realize, again it gets into the theology, but there's a notion called *communicatio idiomatum* which means the communication of properties. That the reason the scripture can say things like Jesus is exalted over all things, even though Jesus would seem to just be referring to his human nature, is that it is the same person. So whatever you say of him in his divine nature you can communicate so to speak that property to his human nature because he's all the same person. He's doing it through his divine nature. He's doing it through his human nature. But it's all the same person. And you know it's the same kind of thing when you could say that God was born in a stable. It's just the opposite direction, but it's the same thing. He wasn't born in the sense of God's divine nature coming into being out of being conceived. But because he became a human being, the one who was conceived of Mary's womb was himself God. And so you can apply that property to the divine nature. And if that's the case then anything that you would say of Jesus Christ on Earth or of another incarnation in the son of God, you could say the same. You could still say Jesus is Lord of all the universe because you're referring to the same son of God in his divine nature, who is this other thing as well. And you could say the same thing about him. There's no distinction there. You can't divide up the son of God's nature in some way. So you know, you have to think about it some, so I encourage people get my book and read this section and think about it some. But there is not a notion of a rival Jesus or something. Or of two sons of God doing it. It's the same son of God taking on two natures. And whatever you say of one of his natures you can say of the others was well. Because in the end, he's all the same person. Does that make sense?

MH Yeah, yeah. The incarnation is not two people coming together.

PT Right.

MH Yeah it's the one divine person assuming a human nature.

And so let's think about this. In that in that Premier Christianity article that I wrote a few months ago I actually quoted you on this and I was engaging another article, I think it was by...oh it was a couple of authors...Tyler McNabb and then I forget the other person but it was it was a great title, *Houston, Do We Have a Problem?* And it was a peer reviewed article. I forget what journal it was in, but anyway, they were talking (and it's a philosophy piece and a philosophical journal), but anyway, they mentioned the idea that perhaps Christ's earthly Incarnation would cover any other sinfulnesses throughout the universe, if there were any. And if I remember right, and folks need to go back and re-read this, because it's been awhile since I read it. But the reason was because if these were rational beings, then then somehow they would... humans as rational, we all share in the same sort of nature and so the human Jesus would cover their sins. What sort of problems might there be with that? And do you favor multiple incarnations, or do you favor the cosmic Christ perspective? You might want to explain what that is.

45:29 PT Yeah. Yeah, yeah. I talk about it in the book. So what I call the cosmic Christ, that's been used for other things too, that term is the notion that in order to redeem the whole universe, God only had to join himself to one nature, our nature. And that had kind of a ripple effect out to any

other creatures made in the image of God. And there are a lot of folks who are convinced that's the way. And I allow for it. I think it could be. It's just that I think there are some issues that we would have to work through to believe that. And this is where we go back to what I mentioned a while ago, the so called the Apollinarian controversy, where the church came back and said, he didn't just assume part of human nature. He assumed all of it. Because if he hadn't assumed all of it, the parts he didn't assume would not have been healed by the redemption of his incarnation, and eventual passion and resurrection. And I actually had this pointed out by one of my undergrad students a few years ago. We were... there's a great christology book by... gosh, I'm not sure if he's still alive... But it's a Catholic priest and theologian that I was using for my undergrads as a christology book. And it has an entire chapter on this issue. [inaudible] said a lot to help me thinking about it. And when I mentioned that part, is it possible that this incarnation is still there? It's maybe possible, but there may be problems. And she right away saw it. She said, look back at the Apollinarian controversy. If there was somebody else who needed to be redeemed, who's really different. I mean, they have the image of God, but otherwise they are really different from us, couldn't you say that this incarnation would not apply to them? Because he would not have become all that it is to become that kind of creature. A simple devotional term where people like in the Catholic tradition we talk about the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We have devotion to his sacred heart. We talk about the heart of God loving us. And you know what if they are reptilian looking or something? What if they had no heart? How could you even have a kind of everyday devotion to an incarnation that was so totally different from yours? It seems so alien. Now maybe it is. Again I will always leave that open. It could be, but it seems to me that principle really has to be considered, thought about, that an incarnation if we were... maybe they'd be so much like us that it would be a problem. But maybe their natures and the sense of their physical natures and even the way their soul operates, might be so different from ours that our incarnation would just seem alien to them. Again, I think it could be the case, but I don't think it has to be the case. And you know Aquinas talked about how, as you mentioned, that although God chose for the incarnation to happen in this way. And for God to redeem us through the incarnation, in all that happened; his life, death and resurrection. He didn't have to do it that way. He's God. He could have done a different way. And when Jesus says it's necessary that the son of man die, that what's behind that is; since God chose that plan, now it's necessary that I die. That's the plan he put in operation. But it doesn't mean that absolutely he could not have done it in a different way. So I think we have to leave those possibilities open. If we get tricky, again, if we finally get to communicate with creatures like this and start asking about God and that kind of thing... and do they even believe in God, then I think we would want to tell them and say, "well here's what we believe... this is what we know to be true." And from there you might have somebody say, "can I be baptized?"...I don't know. Or you might be able to explore with them...you know, "do you have any traditions where you come from of there being a God? What kind of relationship do you have?" We have to figure out in some way. Are they fallen or not? And if they're really evil and deceptive, it might be hard to figure that out at first. But so anyway, the possibilities....

MH When it comes to the incarnation whatever we say, we need to follow the tradition that the patristic idea that whatever is not assumed is not healed. So if there are ET and they are fallen, then Christ's earthly incarnation would apply to them insofar as they are human, essentially, to have human nature.

50:00 PT At least I have that concern... Maybe it would be just enough if they have a rational intellect and a free will, and they have mortal spirits. Maybe that would be enough. Because one of the other questions becomes... we're separated...it could be if they're out there, we could be

separated by billions of years of time. Everybody thinks that cosmological model is true. I think it is, or at least likely. And they might never encounter us. So does God just not care about them, or what? We've had that kind of question come up when we met with the people of the Americas, which, by the way, was also an ontological shock as its sometimes called for the Europeans. All the way back actually to Augustine, you had this notion of what we call the antipodes. And they were the notion that the Earth if it was flat, that it had another side or that it was round. And then on the other side there were human beings who were walking around. And because we walked this way with our legs down and they would be walked in the opposite way. They're called the antipodes, the anti-feet. And somebody asked Augustine could that be true. And he ruled it out. But not for the reasons most people think. They said, he would have rejected aliens. It wasn't that. He ruled it out because he said if they are truly human, they have to be descended from the first man Adam. And we all know, based on current technology, that there's that vast ocean. Even if that place is there, there's no way men could get from here to there. That human beings could get from here to there. So he didn't rule out the possibility that they weren't human at all, but he was he was just focusing on if they're men and women, if they're human, there is no way. And number one, he was not aware of any technology that would have gotten people over the ocean. Number two, he obviously wasn't going to know about the land bridge that originally connected Asia to North America. And so that's a good example of, as much as I love Augustine, he was making his decision based on the technology and not scientific knowledge of the day. So that's another thing you run in to when people say, well, this can't be right because we all know we can't travel faster than the speed of light, et cetera, et cetera. Well, first of all, scientific paradigms have changed again and again, and things that we were so confident of, like the earth data center of things have changed. So science doesn't have the final word on things like that. Nor does technology. There are all kinds of things we do technologically that a generation ago we said was impossible. If you had told somebody a couple generations ago, we'll be able to send pictures and images and sounds through the air 100 years ago, 200 years ago...

MH What we are doing now is science fiction, 200 years ago.

PT Yeah, exactly. I mean, just as a kid, I remember Dick Tracy comic strips and he had this little television and two-way radio kind of thing on his watch. And everybody said, wow, that's crazy. That'll never happen. We got it – it's our phone, it's our watch now. But all that to say, first of all then, science doesn't have the last word now. But second, even among scientists, there are plenty of people who are proposing ideas of how we could have super [inaudible] to travel, travel beyond the speed of light... in the sense that if time and space are all woven together, that there might be a way to actually fold it in such a way that you go from one point to another, that normally would be too far to get through that fast. But you would basically make a jump. You know, the notion of worm holes and other things. Now I'm not saying we know that to be true, we don't. But boy, when it comes to science, never say never, in all kinds of issues like that. So I don't want to be like Augustine was in that situation and say, well we all know there's no technology that would get us from here to there are no way to do that, when sure, there could be.

MH So just the whole topic of ET....and really, the nomenclature, the verbiage that people are using nowadays, not ET. I know Congress, (if people are following all the political stuff), it's NHI now. They're using Non-human Intelligence. So maybe that's a better term. But just the idea of an ET intelligence or a Non-human Intelligence, it sounds crazy. It sounds absurd in many respects. But can you point to places in church history whether recent or modern where devoted Christians really didn't seem to have a problem with the idea that there's a non-human, but very

intelligent, creaturely existence that's not just angels or demons, and not humans, and not animals, but something... a third rational species. Is that a term that you use in your book? I don't remember....

PT I don't call it a rational species but... and I wish that, you know, if I written a book a little later in the conversation, and it had changed to start saying NHA, I probably would...

Cross talk

PT So first, just in general, NHI, yes, Christians affirm that all the time. Angels and demons, they are non-imminent intelligence, right?

MH Right

PT And then you're saying, what I often have to say; is there a possibility of a non-human, non-angelic intelligence? So it's neither of those. And that's where [inaudible] asks the question. So, are the faithful Christians who knew their faith really well who thought that was a possibility? Well, yeah. All the way back to St Jerome. He is the father of Biblical scholarship. He translated all of New Testaments for the first time into Latin. He knew his commentaries and all the biblical books. I mean, he really was the first person to treat the scripture in a scholarly way. Amazing insights...a brilliant man.

And in one of his letters he's talking about how Saint Anthony of the desert went to visit Saint Paul. Both of them were monks out in the desert. They are some of the earliest ones. Lived out there, taught people, worked miracles. And how he goes to see him...and on the way out the desert, he runs into first, a centaur and second a satyr, which are Greek mythological figures. And with a satyr, the centaur then goes away. But with the satyr he actually has a conversation. So, Jerome is reporting all this. Then St. Anthony says to him, "who are you? What are you?" And he says, "I'm one of those creatures that the Greeks falsely worship, but we're not to be worshiped. We are creatures too. And I want to talk to you about.... We've heard about this..." (I don't know if he calls them Messiah or son of God coming to you. I could look it up here in my book.), but "coming to you, we want to know about this Christ." And St Anthony begins to weep. He says, "you know, you go to the Great City of Constantinople or Alexandria and there are Christians who don't have the time of day to think about Christ all day." I mean, I'm paraphrasing, of course. But think about it. And here's this creature, this creature is inquiring about Christ. And, then after that, you can say, first of all, St Jerome could just be repeating stories that he heard that he didn't really believe them. Well, that's ruled out by what he says next. He goes on to say, "well, and if you think these things don't exist, there actually was a certain time. And you can find other historical references to it would have been about the time was born. So not that long before when he was writing that one of these satyrs was captured, brought to, eventually seen by hundreds of people, brought to the emperor to see. When he died, they preserved his body. These things really exist he says.

57:50 So now that doesn't prove, and I always say in my book, that doesn't prove that such things exist. What it does demonstrate clearly, and he's not the only one, that someone could be a faithful Christian and know all that we do about scripture, and he knew scripture better than anybody of his day and for centuries after him, probably doing better than most of us today, who did not see that that would contradict the Christian faith or the Scripture. You have St. Augustine; we just already mentioned in his books that you have God. He refers positively to the existence

of satyrs. I mean he is considered even if you're not Catholic, or Protestant or Orthodox. He's considered one of the greatest theologians and Christian minds of all time.

MH He wasn't crazy. I mean he wasn't a feeble intellect like that.

PT He wasn't into woo, as they call it. He mentions all this in passing...he believes it. And he talks about how that there seemed to be creatures who had what were called bodies made of subtle matter. So that they did have bodies but that they weren't like ours, and subtle in the sense almost like air or wind made of something like that so they could appear and disappear and do all kinds of things. And so that he thought that's the case.

Then wow...skip forward some centuries. There's [inaudible]. What a name for an exorcist. He was an Italian exorcist. And for Catholics, especially, this is the telling thing. he wrote about how now he's an exorcist, he's up against demonic stuff all the time, he knows that the name of Jesus has power over the demons, he knows that the scripture has power over the demons. As a Catholic he knows that the Sacramentals as we call holy word; the things that they respond to, those things they have to under obedience to Christ. And he said though what's been discovered is that sometimes there's a case of what everyone assumes is demonic possession, instead they are encountering something that does not respond at all to any of that. And there seems to be another kind of creature out there. Maybe it was a subtle body type that Augustine was talking about.

You get Father Herbert Thurston in the early 1900s writing about the same thing. He studied a whole bunch of poltergeist cases. And because of Hollywood, we all assume poltergeists means some horrible demonic thing. But you know, he talks about [inaudible] you have all these cases where people think it's diabolical activity. So, stones falling out the sky, somebody getting their covers pulled off their bed, crockery drops and broken. Usually people don't die or anything. You don't have horrible things happen to them. Just annoying things. And he says what's amazing is that the exorcist can turn out and if it really was diabolical, they'd have to respond to the things of the church, to the name Jesus of scripture, and all the rest. But these things...it didn't faze them. And he says they're almost like naughty children. They would do things. Like the exorcist comes in, and he has his scripture in his hands and the other things, and is saying the prayers that would normally subdue a demon; and instead pebbles and mud start being thrown at him to mess with his clothes, and pages ripped are out of the scripture. Now think about that. I mean, if it were demon, the demon would have to stop in the name of Jesus and the other things. But if you had a naughty boy, you know a bad boy who wanted to go in and disturb church and he walked in there and the priest or the pastor said to him "in the name of Jesus stop," you know go up there rip the page, throw mud at him whatever, because he doesn't have to submit in that way, the way a demon does. So people can say that's just too wild for me. But, in that case they're talking about poltergeists. And maybe it is the same kind of thing that we've seen. Fairy folk would be another example of that. You have someone like C.S. Lewis who apparently did believe that they existed. Lewis points out the history of that, talking about that he said it wasn't till quite late in history that the fairy folk that were claimed to exist in Europe were identified with demons, as a demonic thing. That they were seen as a third kind of race that were mortal, not immortal like us, so not fully in the image of God. And they were tricksters. They did kind of fairy things like (inaudible) stuff or steal things; they played jokes or things like that.

MH is this the *Discarded Image*?

PT Yeah

MH It's been a while since I've read that. But yeah, that chapter on fairies is really interesting because he does mention some things in passing as if he just like totally believes it.

PT And there's another occasion where he... I'm trying to remember the details or even where I saw it... he was commenting on how there was... I don't think it was in the same place... on how a young a woman he knew, who was like a nanny of governess for children...

MH Yeah. It's in that chapter.

PT Is it in there?

MH Yeah, yeah.

PT Well, she said these things were real and that kind of thing. And he never says, you know, silly old woman or anything like that. He just... it's as if he takes her to face value. I can't speak for those (inaudible).

1:03:18 MH And I think that's in the context of that he's discussing the size of the fairies. And for those who don't know, this is a book that's kind of a history of the medieval mind. It's a really interesting book historically. But in the section... so he has a discussion about what the Medievals thought about heaven, what Medievals thought about Earth, and then he has this chapter of what did the Medievals think about the space between heaven and earth. And this is the land of the fairies essentially because they had a catalog of these other types of creatures. And he, just as a historian, wants to talk about them and he's a good medievalist scholar and so of course he's got talk about everything. And he's talking a little bit about the size of fairies and if I remember right, he wants everybody to know this is not like the insect size. They're not talking about fairies in terms of like Tinkerbell or something, but these are... he's just trying to discuss like how big did the Medievals think they were? And along the way his nanny... he says, I knew somebody a nanny or whatever who said she saw one. It was about the size of a small child. And then he just kind of goes on as if it's like, "Oh yeah that'll work as part of my data here." (laughing) Yeah. So, you just named several important figures who seem to think that these beings not only were possibly real, but that they could fit within the Christian catalog, if you will, of possible existences. Without any problem.

PT All of them were extremely intelligent, well catechized we could say.

MH Yeah

PT Christians, they weren't just some illiterate peasant or something.

MH This is Saint Jerome.

PT Yeah. Saint Jerome, Saint Augustine, C.S. Lewis. People like that you can't just dismiss even if... and again I say in the book, the fact that they thought this possible doesn't prove.

MH Right.

1:05:10 PT What it does prove though is that you can be a faithful and extremely intelligent well-formed Christian who knows the scripture inside and out, who knows the tradition the church is teaching, and still say, “yeah that’s possible.” In fact say it’s real for some of us. It’s real.

MH So what would you say to folks who might go back and read Augustine or might read Saint Jerome, or just listening to what we’re chatting about, and think like “this is just really weird. I don’t know if I could go there.” What would you say to folks like that? To Christians.

PT I’d say, don’t reel. If it bothers you don’t wrestle with it. Put it on the shelf. The whole reason I’m talking about in the first place is because the kinds of things that they’re encountering now... what you’ll even find in the UFO conversation, the UAP conversation these days is people starting to say, “sometimes I wonder if instead of coming from other planets these things have been here all long.” And they come so often they see the UFOs coming out of water and going down into the water. And so, that’s a common thing. So, the only reason I explore these, is not to try to trouble Christians thinking about it. But to say, look if it doesn’t interest you, well, put it on the shelf, it’s okay. But I’m telling you about this in case evidence should turn up. That it should not undermine your faith. It shouldn’t destroy your faith. Our faith has room for these things. and it’s kind of like Shakespeare said. There’s Horatio. There are things in Heaven and Earth that your philosophy hasn’t even dreamed about. And I think...I would say go back and read the Book of Job. You know some people have often have said, and I quote them at the beginning of my book, “It’s been observed that some of the medieval Christians, especially, when they were denying all this kind of stuff and saying, well the universe has to be a certain way because that’s you know how the philosopher see it. And Aristotle, and so and so...But in many ways they were they were talking about the god of Aristotle not the God of Job. when you read the God of Job, basically what you get is, “where were you when the foundations of the world were laid? Where were you and I tossed the Pleiades and the other stars out there? How much do you really know about this kind of universe that I’ve created?” And in the end Job says, “you’re right Lord. I repent.” Dust and ashes (laughing). And that needs to be our attitude, to have humility that there are all kinds of things that God could do and would do. In the Catholic tradition, anyway, the only the only things that God can’t do are anything that’s contrary to his nature, anything that’s inherently nonsensical – like gibberish to even try to say it, or anything that’s contrary to his divine revelation. But even with that you have to interpret the revelation correctly. So...these things would not be, again as some would say, contrary to divine revelation and I think my book demonstrates that it doesn’t. They’re certainly not inherently impossible. And boy they’re not impossible to God. They’re not contrary to his nature. Everyone all through history, when you get it, people start saying “it can’t happen, God wouldn’t do this, couldn’t do this...” you’ll always have...and I hate to say it but the adults in the room who come along and say, God is God. And if it’s not contrary to his nature and these other things... yeah he can do whatever he desires to do. And we should worship him for it. And what I say in the book, I think we need to maintain this sense of wonder. And the way I describe wonder is, the way I define wonder is humility in the face of mystery. Humility in the face of mystery. There is so much we don’t know about what God has done, what he’s created, all the things out there. I mean, even the visible universe... you know the latest research is suggesting that there’s so much out there that we can’t... that we’ll never even be able to see. So in the face of that kind of mystery, that kind of infinity, we need to have a certain humility that says, God you’re God. Someday having face to face with you, then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. But until then, there’s a lot of I won’t understand.

1:09:30 MH I just want to say thank you for writing the book. It's a tremendous read. I highly recommend everybody check it out. It's called, *Extraterrestrial Intelligence in the Catholic Faith: Are We Alone in the Universe with God and the Angels?* Everybody needs to go check it out. I'll put a link in the description for the show notes here. But I want to give you the last word. Any last word that you want to share with the audience?

PT I want to say, (inaudible). Don't be afraid. A lot of this kind of stuff is can be fear mongering. But I love... probably all your audience knows at least the name of John Paul II. A big character in the world stage in so many ways. And he once had a young girl in an audience where he was at some parish in Rome. And they were asking questions and a young girl asked him, "what about aliens?" And you know, he could have said, "ohh, that's contrary to the faith", or he could have said, "ohh, we don't know. Science will have to tell us." He could have said a lot of things. But what he said was something much simpler and I think beautiful. He said, "always remember, they're God's children too." And that's such a lovely thing, that if they're out there, they're God's children too. Even if they're fallen. Even if we have a difficult time with them, just as everybody on earth is God's children, maybe they're children in a different way, so don't be afraid. There's nothing beyond... if they're out there, God created them and has a purpose for them. And if we encounter them, he will have a purpose for that encounter too.

MH Well, Paul, thanks for being on the show. I appreciate your time, your gift. And everybody go read this book. It's a lot of fun to read. Thanks again for being on the show.

PT Thank you. May God bless you and all your viewers.

1:11:20 That's the end of today's episode. And thanks again for listening to The Bible Unmuted. If you like this podcast, consider rating it on your podcast platform, subscribing to it, and sharing with your friends. You can also support the podcast by becoming a Patreon member. Go to: <https://www.patreon.com/TheBibleUnmuted> - or simply find the link in the description of this episode. Thanks for listening. Until next time, friends.