

CHAPTER 10

DÉJÀ-VU

P'shat & Remez, Clues and Pointers from the Literal Texts

“...as dying, yet behold we live...” ~ Sha’ul

As a Torah teacher and minister for over 21 years now, I have comforted, counseled and prayed for many who were ill and dying. I have also comforted, counseled and prayed for many family members of those who were very ill or had recently died. From early on in my ministry, many people began to relay to me privately what they felt were supernatural experiences experienced by their loved ones shortly before their death, or during near death experiences. Some were reportedly personal experiences. I would listen and encourage, but in the back of my mind I was thinking – *yeah right!* My heart would yearn in sorrow for them over their suffering and/or loss, but I found it difficult to really believe what they said as true. I believed they experienced something, but I assumed

they were suffering from hallucinations, wishful thinking, demonic impersonations etc..., or something..., anything, other than what they were saying. Their testimonies were simply out of the orb of what I could believe. But eventually, after enough testimonies, a person begins to wonder – *what's going on?* Could there be *any* truth to these reports? Fast-forward many years and much more Biblical understanding and I can now see that the arguments I had against their being any possibility of truth to such reports – arguments I felt so secure in – were actually paper tigers. Upon honest examination of these arguments that I inherited, I found they simply lacked the full truth.

I was reluctant to even write this chapter, out of concern that some could not digest its contents. On the other hand, how can a book on the journey of the soul ignore the many questions people have about déjà-vu, past life experiences, seeing long dead loved ones while on their own death bed, or the many after-death or near-death experiences that people who have been medically revived from death claim to have had? Even brain surgeons, (who understand the way the chemical reactions in the brain work during stress and at death) have claimed to have had after death experiences

wherein they say they have seen loved ones, angels or Yeshua Himself, before being revived. It is reportedly documented that others, who have been medically revived from death, have awakened to suddenly find that they now speak another language – or several languages – fluently! These are languages that they never learned, or even had been exposed to in this life. How can this be? Some, even very young children, have claimed to have memories of things that they know they did not experience in this life – memories that are in such detail that some of their memories have been verified historically. Many, under hypnosis, have memories of past lives and events – some of which are verifiable. Others, under hypnosis, have been known to speak one or more foreign languages – languages that they have never learned in this life. It's easy to excuse things we don't understand by calling them “demonic” or “insane hallucinations,” or to excuse them outright by simply refusing to believe them. But when you have as many of these types of reports as we do today, an honest look into the scriptures as to the *possibility* that some of these accounts could have some truth in them, seems reasonable – especially for a book of this kind. Certainly one would expect that a book on the journey

of our souls would not dodge these possibilities altogether, so here we go.

As a Torah teacher, I am very careful about speculation in my teachings. I have dealt with the Biblical topics contained in this book in a straight forward truthful and honest way by applying and believing the literal meaning of the Biblical text (called P'shat). So I want to be clear that one cannot be quite as assertive with some of the material presented in this chapter, as with other topics. Some topics in the Bible are simply made more plain than others. So I do not consider this to be "doctrine," nor do I want to be absolute or dogmatic here. But we do have some *very powerful substantiation* contained within this chapter, along with some clues, secrets and things to ponder. I'll let you decide based upon the information provided, what you believe. I don't feel the need to convince anyone of anything. My only aim is to teach truth faithfully, to present the scriptures before you honestly and with hope and shalom and to encourage my readers to think honestly without the blinders of preconceived beliefs. I prefer to stimulate my readers think and provide information so they can form their own beliefs.

Many of my Jewish brothers and sisters will recognize what *Remez* and *Sod* mean, but others of my dear friends and readers may not. In Jewish thinking there is a tradition of four main methods of how to interpret scripture. Rabbi Shapira does a wonderful job of explaining this in his book, *The Return of the Kosher Pig*, pages 29 – 32. This tradition of hermeneutics and exegeses is a good one that has been in practice from ancient times, but was simplified and summarized in the writings of one of the famous Rabbis of the 1500s. These keys to scriptural interpretation will be explained briefly:

- **Pey for P'shat** = applying the literal meaning of the Biblical text. This is the method that I use in the vast majority of my studies and teachings. Any other method of Torah or Bible study that is used must always be in agreement with the P'shat of the text.
- **Resh for Remez** = clues and pointers. Many references in the Bible are put together in such a way that they leave a clue as to a point that is in addition to the P'shat. They point the reader to further understanding. There are thousands of these clues in the Bible. For example, the

instruction not to yoke an ox and an ass together of often found next to the prohibition against sowing diverse seed in your field. This clue shows us the ox and the ass or the seed of the field are not the only principles that are being discussed. The principle of not mixing things that are in some way opposed to each other is actually the spirit of this teaching.

- **Daled for Drash** = allegorical interpretation (midrash).
- **Samech for Sod** = Secrets. These are the hidden meanings of Torah and Tanach.

Together, these four methods are called PARDES.

So let's compare the Sod and the P'shat of a few passages that deal with the subjects referred to above and discover the clues and secrets, but especially the plain Bible revelations, and see what we can learn.

Most are familiar with the famous play, *Fiddler On The Roof*. This musical play is a story is about life in exile by a Jewish man and his wife and daughters. There is the matchmaker trying to arrange marriages.

There is the enduring father trying to survive life in exile with his wife and so many daughters, without losing his sanity. At one point in the play, he seeks to arrange a marriage for one of his daughters to a previously married older man who is the town butcher. The butcher's wife is now deceased, so he is free to remarry. But the daughter does not want to marry the much older butcher – she is attracted to a much younger Taylor. It's all very entertaining. The mother contrives a plan to intervene for her daughter and thus begins to tell the tale of an incredible dream she had to her husband and the Jewish community. The dream is about the butcher's former wife coming back from the dead to prevent the marriage. The Jewish community believes the dream and the marriage is off. Now romance with the Taylor is free to bloom. It's all very good entertainment, but it does depict very accurately the beliefs many Jews maintain; that some have had past lives while others have seen or heard from loved ones after their deaths! The belief that some have had past lives is a very ancient and often widely held belief among Jews.

There are more books written on the subject of *after death experiences* than I can mention. There are also an innumerable amount of testimonies from people

who have claimed to have been visited by dead family members, while lying on their own death bed. Others who were medically revived from death claim to have seen the souls of family members in an after-death-experience, only to be told they must return to their bodies and finish out this life. Let's now compare the P'shat of the Biblical texts with the Sod to see if there could be any truth to these types of testimonies. Don't be so sure they can be Biblically discounted.

REVIEWING THE FACTS, CLUES AND SECRETS:

The Remez or Clues:

Estimates of those who believe in some form of past lives in the United States range from 30% - 40%, yet many are still afraid to speak of such things out of fear of what others might think of them. Most people keep these kinds of thoughts to themselves. I do not believe we ought to be afraid to speak about any subject that we find in Holy Bible, while pursuing the truth.

Many Christians discount the possibility of past lives, or any form of reincarnation, based upon the claim that men can have only one life in the flesh. The main scripture quoted in support of this position is always Heb 9:27! In fact, it is usually the only scripture quoted in support of their position. Let's review it.

Heb 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,

Many passages in the Bible refer to the time of death as a time of judgment. The final Biblical judgment at the great resurrection, is not the only time God judges. For example, we know that the apostle Kefa (Peter) spoke of judgment already being on the house of God (1 Pet 4:17). What if, for some at death, God's judgment was/is that they be born again to live and learn and do in the flesh again? What if, for some, they still have more that God wants them to learn or do? There is a variety of possible answers to Heb 9:27 that must be considered. One thing is for certain, we do have Biblical record of people living more than one life in the flesh! That is just a fact.

Sha'ul (Paul's) point, in Heb 9:27, was that Messiah died once for all mankind – a point he makes very well. I do not feel the need to twist this verse to mean something it was not intended to communicate, so that it fits convenient belief patterns.

For example, what about those who were resurrected back into fleshly bodies? Clearly they lived more than once in the flesh. So that cannot be the meaning of Heb 9:27.

Paul's focus in Heb 9:27 was not to say that no man could ever live more than once in the flesh, it was that Messiah would only have to die once in the flesh to pay for the sins of all mankind throughout all generations.

Consider other ways the same Greek word *ha'pax* translated "once" in Heb 9:27 is also used in the Bible:

- There is the Biblical phrase, "Yet 'once more'" (*ha'pax*), clearly meaning more than once (Heb 12:26).
- *Ha'pax* is translated "Once" in (1 Pet 3:20), where it is used to denote a considerably long period of time, not necessarily a single event or thing that happened only once.
- *Ha'pax*, "Once", is used to speak of those who were "once enlightened" (Heb 6:4), meaning they were enlightened in the past – not that they heard the truth only one time.

We have already seen record that Messiah Himself had more than one life in the flesh (see chapter 3). He also toned Himself down so He could appear to Abraham in the flesh. He wrestled with Jacob in the flesh. Yeshua lived and died in the flesh. After death, He went to Hell. Then 3 days later, He was raised back to

the flesh again. Remember what He said to the disciples after His resurrection?

Luke 24:39

Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I
Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not
have flesh and bones as you see I have."

(emphasis mine)

Messiah was raised to live in His flesh and bones again. Then after 40 days He was changed and taken up into Heaven as a spirit being (Acts 1:1 – 3).

Those who maintain that the verse, "*it was appointed unto men to die once, but after this the judgment (Heb 9:27),*" precludes the possibility of men living more than once in the flesh have some real textural problems with the Biblical text that must be faced. Soon we'll consider more than a few Biblical instances where the saints have lived and died in the flesh more than once. I'm not talking about obscure texts or clues; I'm referring to plain biblical texts where saints lived in the flesh more than once.

Let's first review a statute from Torah:

Deut 18:10-11

10 There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, *or one* who practices witchcraft, *or a*

soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

First, I'd like to mention that none of the references to past lives that were referred to earlier were of anyone calling up the dead. They were of dreams and/or experiences from people who did not call up or seek these experiences in anyway.

Secondly, let's consider a basic truth. Torah forbids calling up the dead, it does not say the dead cannot be called up. Samuel was called up, but Saul paid for this sin with his life. IN NO WAY do I advocate seeking to call up the dead - ever!

Most Jewish belief in reincarnation is not like that of the eastern religions with their belief in a system where people have to earn their way up from lower life forms of animals to people and so on – or – where people, in essence, had to save themselves through eventually perfecting the soul through many lives. I personally do not believe that, nor is that belief a part of this chapter or book.

It's just a historical fact that many of the great Jewish thinkers, from ancient times, believed the soul could be reincarnated into more than one physical human body. Belief in past lives runs through the writings of

such famous authors and historians as Flavius Josephus and Philo. The same has been said of the Jewish sage Hillel and many other famous and influential Rabbis. Both the Pharisees and the Essenes, (the sect that is connected with the Dead Sea Scrolls) believed in past lives or reincarnation. Historically, belief that some could have more than one birth and death in the flesh has been such a common belief among the Jews that it often did not even bear explanation. It was simply an accepted belief that was assumed as common. I share these ancient and more recent historical references of Jewish belief in past lives with my readers, not as proof of these beliefs, but as proof that these beliefs existed from ancient times to the present, among many Jews.

For example, notice the words regarding the belief of the Pharisees, as recorded by Flavius Josephus:

“They also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison, but that the former shall have power to revive and live again.” Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, (Book 18, Chapter 1, Section 3).

When trying to encourage his fellow Jews in a time of war, Josephus spoke of the pure souls of men being given new bodies;

“...whence, in the revolution of ages, they are again sent into pure bodies; while the souls of those whose hands have acted madly against themselves, are received by the darkest place in Hades...” (Josephus, *Wars of the Jews*, Chapter 8, Section 5).

Notice the words of the wise from the ancient book Ecclesiasticus 41:8 – 9 proclaiming that ungodly men who forsake God’s law will be reborn in another life to inherit their curse.

“Woe be unto you, ungodly men, which have forsaken the law of the most high God: for if you increase it shall be to your destruction. And if you be born, you shall be born to a curse.” (Ecclesiasticus 41:8-9 ,*Brenton Translation* by Hendrickson Publishers).

In the Zohar we read;

"All souls are subject to the trials of transmigration (reincarnation); and men do not know the designs of the Most High with regard to them; they know not how they are being at all times judged, both before coming into this

world and when they leave it. They do not know how many transmigrations and mysterious trials they must undergo.” (*Zohar*, Vol. II, fol. 99)

(I am not a student of Kabbalah nor do I agree with everything in the *Zohar*. However, the *Zohar* can be a good historical reference, and like much of the world’s wisdom literature; it too has something to offer.)

Let’s now review more potent passages regarding past lives from the Brit Hadashah (New Covenant passages) and see what many of the Jews of Yeshua’s day believed about people coming back from the dead to be born again into physical bodies.

Mark 6:14-16

14 Now King Herod heard *of Him*, for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him."

15 Others said, "It is Elijah." And others said, "It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets."

16 But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!"

Luke 9:7-8

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it

was said by some that John had risen from the dead,

⁸ and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.

Matt 14:1-2 gives a similar account. Not only did Herod believe Yeshua was John the Baptist come back from the dead, but those around Herod believed John was Elijah. Others present believed John was one of the other prophets coming back from the dead, in the flesh. Such beliefs were common among the Jews of the day, of today and from long ago.

One day Messiah asked His disciples who the people thought He was. Let's review the passage:

Matt 16:13-14

When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

So they said, "Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

You will find similar accounts in Mark 8:27 – 29 and Luke 9:18 – 19. Just like in the play, *Fiddler On the Roof*, many Jews in Messiah's time also believed that some people could come back from the dead (be born

again in the flesh) to live in the flesh again. This is a very ancient belief among many biblical Jews.

Some believed Yeshua was John the Baptist coming back from the dead, others thought He was Elijah reincarnated, some thought He was Jeremiah, others thought he was another prophet. It's interesting to ponder where these beliefs came from, but *who asked the question* in this instance is something much more interesting to ponder.

It was not the people who asked such a question – it was Messiah Himself! Messiah brought the subject of reincarnation of the soul up in the form of a question. If the Jewish belief in reincarnation was a baseless impossibility, surely Messiah would not have brought the whole subject up – especially if He was not going to use the opportunity to correct this line of thinking.

As a matter of fact, the way Messiah addressed the whole matter clearly adds even more credibility to the subject matter as being something entirely possible. Yeshua discussed it with His disciples as a normal and a reasonable discussion. Here's the point: If these beliefs were wrong, why didn't Messiah correct them for such false beliefs – especially since He Himself is the one who brought reincarnation up? I hope you can see the importance and logic of this point – this is a very powerful point!

A little honest review of the scriptures and we can see that belief in past lives was a common understanding among the people of God. Messiah had a habit of correcting people when they expressed to him erroneous beliefs. But here we have multiple occasions where this same subject came up, either by the crowds, by Herod and even by Messiah Himself – and Messiah never once corrected it! This cannot be simply explained away. These are real instances – real examples!

In fact, there was another time when Messiah was asked about things pertaining to after death experiences. Remember the woman whose husband died, so she married her dead husband's brother? The account details this happening with each of seven successive brothers. Each time she married a brother, they too died and she thus married the next brother in line until she had married all seven brothers. The Sadducees then asked Messiah whose wife she would be in the next life. The crowds of Sadducees were confused about life after death. When they made presumptuous statements about life after death Messiah corrected them (Matt 22:29 – 30)!

Yeshua is the great Rabbi – the great Teacher – so He taught them the truth. He was not going to let their ignorant beliefs go without correcting them. So why didn't Messiah correct the crowds, or His disciples, when on multiple occasions, they clearly displayed

belief that people could be born again in the flesh, to live and die again, more than once – and perhaps multiple times?

Messiah's habit of correcting erroneous doctrines or beliefs is a Remez (clue). The absence of Messiah's correction regarding the belief in past lives is also a Remez (clue). Perhaps it is a clue of a Sod (secret truth)?

- Messiah didn't correct the people or his disciples when they believed John the Baptist was either Elijah or one of the prophets come back from the dead in the flesh. WHY?
- Messiah didn't correct the people when they expressed their belief that He was Jeremiah, Elijah or one of the other prophets come back from the dead. Why?
- Messiah brought up the subject of reincarnation to His disciples and did not correct them or the people for their belief in reincarnation. Why?
- Messiah didn't later privately correct this belief to His disciples either. Why?

**JOHN WAS BORN OF A WOMAN
– NOT RESURRECTED –**

AND THE PEOPLE KNEW IT!

There's more – much more. Some have erroneously claimed that the Jews, early Messianic Jews and Christians, did not believe in past lives or transmigration of the soul – only in resurrections. While it is true that their beliefs differed from that of eastern reincarnation, they clearly did believe in one or more reincarnations that involved physical rebirth(s) and death(s).

Let's examine the facts. John the Immerser was a very popular and well known figure. There's no question about that. He was so well known that he is even mentioned in the Talmud and in the works of Flavius Josephus. It was not just his incredible teachings that garnered him this kind of notoriety. We must remember who his father was! John was the son of the priest Zacharias. Let's review briefly the account of John's birth, because it was a very public event.

Luke 1:5-14

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,

9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

Notice there was a “multitude” of people waiting for Zacharias (verses 10) and that “many” would rejoice at John’s birth (verse 14). Yes indeed, John’s birth to Zacharias and Elizabeth was well known among the populace and it was well documented. Even his Brit (circumcision ceremony) was a public event (see Luke chapter 1).

So when the crowds asked John who he was, it was a clear reference to reincarnation, for they knew full well that he had been born of a woman in their own community. They knew he was not resurrected! His life was one of being born in a way that the general public was all well aware of his birth. Likewise, his death was just as well known! So when the people asked John, who he was, it was because they believed he was a re-born soul, born anew from a past life!

Some who desperately claim the Bible does not teach that men (or women) can have past lives have claimed that the Jews and Christians believed only in resurrections. The evidence shown herein is ample evidence that such statements are either made out of ignorance or worse. You're eyes are seeing evidence that the people of Yeshua's day, and long before Yeshua's birth, believed having multiple past lives through rebirth – not just by resurrection – was an accepted belief among the Pharisees, Essenes, Messiah's disciples, key Biblical figures, and at times a seeming majority of Jews.

In fact, being born to live a new life in the flesh was an accepted belief and an expected reality, until it was stamped out by the Roman Emperor Justinus in 553 A.D.! Justinus's new position was subsequently endorsed by the Roman Church. In fact, historical sources reflect that the Popes and Cardinals made

belief in any past life of a soul, a basis for being anathema from Christ. The effects of those verdicts on Christianity and civilization are still with us today.

Can you believe God's words even under duress and opposition?

What about Yeshua? Were the people aware that He was born of a woman – the son of Mary? Obviously they were, for in denying His virgin birth, they tried to accuse Him of being born of fornication (John 8:41)!

Clearly, the people knew Yeshua was born of a woman in their community – not resurrected – yet they still asked Him if He was one of the prophets born again from the dead (reincarnated) to live life in the flesh again! Can you accept what is written in your Bible?

EASTERN BELIEF IN REINCARNATION VS COMMON JEWISH BELIEF IN MULTIPLE PAST LIVES VIA REBIRTH

Here is one big difference between the eastern belief in reincarnation and Jewish belief in past lives as recorded in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament); those who thought John the Baptist or Messiah were reincarnated did not believe rebirth was necessarily a matter trying to work your way up in the circle of karma. While it was believed that rebirth may

sometimes be to pay for past sins or to learn something, it was understood that such was not always the case. Clearly the prophets Jeremiah, Elijah and the other prophets were highly respected and considered very righteous. There is not even a hint that anyone thought these prophets had come again because they needed to be reborn to learn from their past sins. The passages indicate that the people believed that, if these righteous prophets did return in the flesh again, it was for their service and witness for God – nothing else. There is no hint that the righteous prophets needed to escape the eastern belief in the cycle of reincarnation through constant improvement from lower life to higher life. But they did believe in reincarnation for the prophets and saints!

Let's now review more scriptures that indicate past lives, at least for some, are a reality. The evidence is just getting started, so let's go deeper:

John 9:1-3

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth.

2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

Here a straight forward question was asked of Messiah; “who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” How can a person’s sins cause them to be born blind, since at birth they would not yet have had an opportunity to sin?

Again I ask, how can a person’s sins cause them to be born blind, if they have never lived before?

I am aware that one of the rabbis stated that he believe people can sin in the womb, but in light of other clear Biblical teachings, such a statement strikes me as more than absurd. It strikes me and many other Bible students as completely ludicrous! Clearly we cannot sin while we are still in our mother’s womb as a little fetus! Such a belief is counter to many clear scriptures to the contrary.

James said; “To him who knows to do good and does it not, to him is it sin (James 4:7).” Babies do not yet know to do good or evil, much less the fetuses of the unborn children (Isa 7:16).

God told Moshe and Israel in the wilderness that their little children had no knowledge of good or evil. Therefore, He would not hold them accountable for the sins Israel committed while in the wilderness, and they were allowed to enter the Promised Land. God did not impute sin to the children up to age 20! How much less would God not impute sin to a fetus!

Deut 1:39

'Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it.

There's no doubt, babes in the womb cannot sin. Thankfully God's word teaches us that sin requires a certain knowledge and maturity. So Messiah's answer left in the air the clear impression that it is indeed possible to have sinned in a past life, and for that sin to cause one to be born blind.

One could argue, with good reason, that Messiah's answer presumed that their question was appropriate and entirely possible. We cannot judge why people are born with physical infirmities – we simply don't know. Sometimes it may be one thing, sometimes another. For one person it could be entirely for God's service. For another, it may be for their personal character growth. For another, it may be strictly for the betterment of others. For another, it may be corrupted DNA? Messiah simply said that, in this case, it was not the sin of this man or his parents that caused him to be born blind. But Messiah did not preclude that being born blind because of past sins was a real possibility.

This seems like it would have been one more perfect opportunity for Messiah to correct the belief that people can have more than one life in the flesh, if it were incorrect! This is a powerful point!

As a matter of fact, the question of if this man's sins caused him to be born blind, fits in exactly with what king David believed and taught:

Ps 51:4 – 5

4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil from your perspective; so that you are right in accusing me and justified in passing sentence.

5 True, I was born guilty, was a sinner from the moment my mother conceived me.CJB

The CJB translators have picked up the tense correctly. David believed he was a sinner from *before* birth. Not only from birth – but from the MOMENT he was conceived in his mother's womb, he said he was already guilty! The very moment conception takes place; there is only one fertilized cell – that's it! From that moment, David says he was already a sinner – already guilty. Do you really believe one single cell can sin? The very thought is preposterous. Like the account in John 9:1 – 3, this passage from Ps 51 only makes sense if you consider a past life before this birth as a reality, (a previous life where men and women

were free to sin and die before being born again into a new body of flesh).

Everyone has heard of the French expression *déjà-vu*. It means “already seen.” It’s that feeling we get when we recognize places we’ve never been – or – when we recognize people we’ve never met in this life. Could there be any truth to *déjà-vu*?

Those who want to hold on to their beliefs, regardless of the preponderance of evidence to the contrary, will just go on believing what they want to believe. That is a given. But those who are capable may want to at least consider carefully the Biblical clues and the evidences. Get ready, for there’s a lot more to come. Let’s use our minds and think – think logically.

Matt 21:28-31

"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'

29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.

30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.

31 Which of the two did the will of *his* father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors

and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

Here we have Messiah account of the father and his two sons being asked to work in the vineyard. The one who did the will of his father was the one commended. Messiah finishes off the story by stating that tax collectors and harlots would enter the kingdom of God before those listening to Him who considered themselves righteous (verse 31). Yeshua did not say those present would not enter the kingdom of God. He just said that others would enter first. Now consider; either He was saying that those present would come back and live again in the flesh, with the result that they would then repent and believe (like the tax collectors had previously done) or Messiah's words would not make any sense. Since we don't enter the kingdom while living in the flesh, clearly we must first die and be born again of spirit (see John 3). The tax collectors and harlots would be born again of spirit, after their death, and then enter the kingdom. The unrepentant, who did not do the will of their father, also died. They too got to enter the Kingdom, but they did not get to enter the kingdom at that time. Why would Messiah make that distinction, unless their actions actually mattered? The unrepentant would need a further opportunity to live again, repent and then enter. It only makes sense logically. It seems there are two possibilities:

1. If the only judgment and entry into the kingdom was at the time of the great resurrection to judgment, then the repentant tax collectors would enter while the others would not ever enter the kingdom. But that scenario does not fit what Messiah said. He said both parties would enter, but at different times.
2. The repentant tax collectors and harlots would enter the kingdom first. Then those Messiah was speaking to would have another opportunity to live in the flesh, repent and believe, so they too could enter later.

Here are a few more short pithy passages, beginning with Job, that give food for thought as to what these godly Biblical figures believed about men having more than one life in the flesh.

Job 1:21

he said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return there. *Adonai* gave; *Adonai* took; blessed be the name of *Adonai*." CJB

I think the point is rather obvious that the only way we can return to our mother's womb is to be reborn of a woman again. Job's statement would be impossible for adults. It is only possible for infants who are reborn. For Job's statement to make sense there must be more

than one mother and/or more than one physical birth from his mother's womb! Here's another:

1 Sam 2:6

"The LORD kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up.

This passage seems to indicate a frequent rising up, not the great resurrection. I'll let you decide.

Here's another pithy example that either must be *explained away*, or it too indicates more than one life:

Rev 3:12

He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And *I will write on him My new name.*

To those who overcome, like the tax collectors and harlots, God will make them a pillar in His temple, and they will "go out no more." To "go out no more" implies at the very least that they once had come in, had to go out, and then came in again!

Now let's consider the passage, "It is appointed unto all men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb

9:27),” one more time. It is hoped that the reader will be able to see the scriptural proof that the meaning of Heb 9:27 cannot be that men can live only once in the flesh, for the examples of those who have lived more than once preclude that interpretation.

Again, I ask the question: What if God’s judgment, upon the death of some, was that they must live in the flesh again? We know that death is a time marker for judgment. Judgment does not need to wait until the great resurrection, for Peter said judgment is now on the house of God (1 Pet 4:17).

FURTHER EVIDENCE OF MORE THAN ONE LIFE IN THE FLESH

Do we have Biblical evidence of people living more than one life in the flesh?

- Elijah raised a boy back to life.

1 Kings 17:20-23

Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?"

21 And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him."

22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he revived.

23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

Elijah was used by God to raise the dead. The child was raised back to another physical life. We don't know how long the child was dead, but it appears that it was a relatively short period of time. The child lived again in the flesh, but he only lived out the remainder of his physical life and then died again.

- Many, if not most, believe that the great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:5 is a resurrection back to physical life! Those resurrected in Rev 20:5 were judged unworthy of being firstfruits. Of course they will be judged again for how they live after this resurrection too. How does your understanding of (Heb 9:27) fit with the reality of this resurrection?
- We have the account of Messiah raising Lazarus back to life in the flesh after he had been dead and in the tomb for four days (see John 11). Those present mentioned that Lazarus' body

was beginning to decay. Non-the-less, Lazarus was able to resume his life again.

- We have the account of the man who was let down onto the bones of the prophet Elisha:

2 Kings 13:21

So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band *of raiders*; and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

These are incredible examples, but they have one thing in common – those resurrected were able to resume their same lives in the flesh among the people they knew. In light of the abundance of evidence presented so far, let's visit the meaning of Heb 9:27 once more.

Heb 9:27

And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.

Clearly Heb 9:27 cannot mean that men can live only once in the flesh, for we have already seen than many people do live more than once in the flesh! It means that men die *at least* once, not only once, for the scripture cannot be broken. It also means that Messiah died once for all men for all time. Let's not twist the

scriptures to fit our beliefs. That's not Bible study – that's Bible manipulation.

Reincarnation implies living a new life in a fleshly body. It implies living among a new generation of people that did not know you personally from your previous life.

Do we have Biblical accounts of some living more than one life in the flesh – lives that are separated by a considerable length of time – such that they would live physically among a completely new generation? Yes!

Matt 27:50-53

But Yeshua, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

51 At that moment the *parokhet* in the Temple was ripped in two from top to bottom; and there was an earthquake, with rocks splitting apart.

52 Also the graves were opened, and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life;

53 and after Yeshua rose, they came out of the graves and went into the holy city, where many people saw them. CJB

WOW! There we have it!

Before we consider the full ramifications of this plain truth, let's see what the word translated "many" means. It comes from the Greek word *πολύς* *polús* and it means and is translated as: *a great multitude, a large number, a large quantity, great crowds, great, large, many*. Also, take note that those resurrected were not common people. They were special – they were "holy".

Cities in those days were not so large like the cities of today. Holy people have always been a small minority. That's one reason why only Joshua and Caleb entered the Promised Land, out of so many millions of people! It would take a considerable number of years for those in that area to produce enough dead holy people (at least many decades) to have enough people die to have a great multitude of dead holy people! These were not just a few saints who knew Yeshua but had died before His death and resurrection. This was a great multitude of holy people. That would require, at the very least, more than one generation time! Likely, those resurrected spanned from many generations. Some may have been dead for 100 years or more – some 300 years or more – some 500 years or more – some 1000 years or more prior to their new life in the flesh!

Here's the point: This resurrection back to physical life was for a large mass of Hebrew people to live completely new lives in the flesh again. (Remember, the Gentiles were not yet given the opportunity to be

grafted into Israel at this time – these were all holy Hebrew saints.) They lived again, this time, among completely different people that they did not know. They met new people, made new friends, lived in new houses and witnessed a changed landscape among a new generation of people! They lived in the flesh again and died again, just like reincarnation! Clearly, Heb 9:27 cannot be interpreted to preclude some living and dying more than once in the flesh, for here we have evidence of a great multitude that did just that! Indisputably, this is another very powerful point. But there's much more.

**MANY BELIEVE IN PAST AND FUTURE LIVES
IN THE FLESH BUT
DON'T ADMIT IT OR DON'T REALIZE IT**

Every year, Jews and Messianic believers all around the world keep a Seder (Passover meal) at Pesach (Passover). It is customary to leave one empty chair, one place setting and one cup for Elijah. This is based upon God's promise that God would send Elijah the Prophet, before the great and terrible day of His vengeance.

Mal 4:5

Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet
Before the coming of the great and dreadful day
of the LORD.

Christians all over the world also believe Elijah will return *before* Messiah comes again. It's a big part of the prophetic understanding for Jews and Christians alike. Now let's consider Elijah. There is no doubt that when Elijah comes again that he will live in the flesh, for the great resurrection of the bodies of the saints into their own spirit bodies does not take place until Messiah returns after the 7th trumpet (1 Cor 15:52 & Rev 11:18).

Since Elijah is to return in the flesh, whether he is born or resurrected, clearly it is understood that Elijah will live more than once in the flesh! When he comes again, clearly it is understood that Elijah will have had a past physical life! Who gets to tell God that He cannot do that, because of Heb 9:27? Then there's the next question: Who gets to tell God that He cannot do that with anyone else except Elijah?

In Elijah we have evidence of at least two separate lives in the flesh, separated by thousands of years! However, for those who can accept it, the words of Messiah indicate Elijah may have had three! Notice:

Matt 11:13-14

For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And if you are willing to receive *it*, he is Elijah who is to come.

Messiah said, "...if you are willing to receive it, he (John the Immerser) **is** Elijah..."! He didn't say John was like Elijah. I know most people explain this away by exclaiming John only came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). Since the spirit gives life to the soul, what does it mean to come with someone else's spirit?

Can we really come with the spirit of another person? Which is easier to believe?

I realize that Elisha had a double portion of Elijah's spirit. But the prophet Malachi did not prophesy that someone would come and do a similar work or preach a similar message to Elijah's. He stated plainly, Elijah would come again. God promised Elijah would come again before any mass resurrection to physical or spirit bodies! The question is: Do we believe Messiah meant what He said?

Remember too, this passage about John being the Elijah to come is given in the context of the masses of people, and the disciples of Yeshua, all believing that Elijah was going to come again in a fleshly body. They knew John was born of a woman – they witnessed it, but they still thought he was Elijah reborn. Messiah Himself said John was Elijah, and He knew John was born – not resurrected.

Did Messiah say this account was only for those who could receive it, because He knew some could not receive it? It seems rather easy for people to assume Yeshua just meant John's mission was kind of like Elijah's. But everyone can receive that very easily!

Messiah's explanation that John was Elijah come again was something He said was too difficult to be received by everyone. What do you believe?

There is no doubt that the context of Elijah's return in Malachi was only fulfilled in part through John the Immerser, so most Christians believe Elijah will yet return. That then, would be Elijah's third time in the flesh – with at least two of those fleshly lives being by birth! Even if you cannot receive that John was Elijah, scripture still reveals that Elijah has two completely separate lives in the flesh. We cannot now say if, when Elijah comes again, it will be by birth or resurrection.

Let's now consider a few interesting Biblical comparisons between John the Immerser and Elijah:

- Eliyahu was hairy and wore a uniquely notable leather belt around his waist.

2 Kings 1:8

So they answered him, "A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist." And he said, "It *is* Elijah the Tishbite."

- John the Immerser wore the same type of unique clothing as Elijah.

Matt 3:4

Now John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.

THE TWO WITNESSES

Rev 11:3-7

And I will give *power* to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

⁴ These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the God* of the earth.

⁵ And if anyone wants to harm them, fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner.

⁶ These have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The Witnesses Killed ⁷ When they finish their testimony, the beast that ascends out of the

bottomless pit will make war against them,
overcome them, and kill them.

Many have noticed that the miracles the two witnesses perform by the power of God are unique; and that they are the same miracles that two particular prophets have performed in the past – Moshe and Eliyahu (Moses and Elijah). Here are a few interesting points to ponder:

- The miracles the two witnesses do are the same unique miracles as those done by Moses and Elijah.
- Compare the miracles of Moses in the Exodus account with those of the Two Witnesses in Revelation.
- Compare the miracles of the ministry of Elijah with those of the Two Witnesses in Revelation.
- Moses and Elijah were seen working together in the transfiguration (Matt 17:1 – 3).
- Moses fasted for 40 full days (Ex 34:28). Other than Yeshua and Elijah, no other prophet has ever fasted that long – 40 full days and nights with no water or food!

- Elijah fasted for 40 full days (1 Kg 19:8). Other than Yeshua and Moses, no other prophet has ever fasted that long – 40 full days and nights with no water or food!

It appears possible (some say likely) that Moshe may also come again in the flesh as one of the two witnesses. We know the two witnesses come in the flesh (not as spirits), since they die of martyrdom three days before the Seventh Trumpet blast announcing the resurrection and return of Messiah (Rev 11:12 – 15). Will they be reborn or resurrected? Are they Moses and Elijah?

Does this mean that all men must experience reincarnation? No. However, in order to serve God's purpose and in order to serve God's people however God desires, it appears that many Hebrew's may experience reincarnation (rebirth into a physical body).

Does this mean reincarnation is necessary for salvation? No.

Does this mean the possibility of a person having past lives, (Jewish version of reincarnation, not the Gentile eastern version) was widely believed by Israel and that such belief is at least congruent with the scriptures? Yes.

Since we have seen that God has given a great multitude more than one life in the flesh, and Elijah more than one life in the flesh (and many others) who are we to say God isn't giving many others more than one life in the flesh? Who are we to say God hasn't been giving some of the saints' more than one life in the flesh for a long time? Perhaps that ancient Jewish belief in past lives is based in some truth after all? You get to decide what you believe. But it's just a fact that past lives, (multiple physical past lives and deaths), has been a Biblical reality for a great multitude of saints over the ages.