

CHAPTER 10

DÉJÀ-VU OR
REINCARNATION?
A Biblical View...

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

Reinarnation or past lives in the Bible? Really?

In the previous chapter on predestination, we saw many Biblical passages of how God has loved us and chosen us from before the foundation of the world – not just after it. Clearly, the foundation of the world took place before the sixth day when Adam’s body was formed from the dust of the ground. How can you choose or love someone who does not exist? The truth is, God has loved you for a long time. In Isa 51:16 we read:

*“...I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,
That I may plant the heavens, Lay the foundations of
the earth, and say to Zion, 'You are My people.'”*

Clearly we have seen in many instances how God *breathes life* (נְשָׁמָה n^ošāmāh) into our *soul* (נֶפֶשׁ nepēš) and has watched over each of our souls from before the foundation of this world. Our life does not originate with our fleshly birth nor is our life strictly or exclusively tied to our few years in the flesh. We have seen that our body is called a tent, a house, a tabernacle, a temple, a dwelling. All these synonyms for body have one thing in common – they’re all temporary dwellings – something you can move into and out of again and again, if need be. I have lived in several houses. They are not the life. They are merely dwellings for the life. The soul is the life, for God has breathed (נָפַח: nāpāḥ, #5397) His breath His breath of life into us and we became living souls (נֶפֶשׁ nepēš, #5315) *living beings* (Gen 2:7). It is the spirit from God that gives life to our soul (2 Cor 3:6). Our soul is spiritual; our bodies are not.

Some believe that the word for breath in Genesis 2, *napah*, refers to the upper more spiritual aspect of our soul, while *nepes* refers to the lower or more base and carnal aspects of our souls. This is not the way the Bible uses these terms. Clearly God says many times that He has a soul (5315 – nepes, see Jer 32:41), and there is no aspect of God that is base, rudimentary, lowly or carnal in any way! The spirit gives life to the soul, the spirit is not the soul. Once the spirit gave life to the soul, the soul became a living being (Gen 2:7).

The soul is a spiritual life that can live in a physical body. Our souls are not subject to death and decay – they cannot be killed (Matt 10:28). (Only God can destroy a soul.) Our bodies are made only from the dust from the ground – they are physical - carnal. They die. Our bodies get their life from the blood being oxygenated by the breath. Without our soul, which has the spirit in it, our bodies die. Remember, James said that the body without the spirit is dead – not the other way around (Jm 2:26).

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, some would relay to me privately what they felt were supernatural experiences experienced by their loved ones shortly before their death, or during near death experiences. Others were personal first-hand 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 wanted to 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. A deeper open minded study was required.

Initially, I was reluctant to 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 or near experiences wherein they say they have seen loved ones, angels or Yeshua Himself, before being revived

and put back into their bodies. It is reportedly documented that others, who have had near death or brief death experiences have awakened to suddenly find that they spoke unconsciously in another language – fluently – languages that they have never spoken in this life before! This phenomenon, called Xenoglossy, has been witnessed during hypnotism to past-life regression as well by respected experts in this field, such as psychiatrist Dr. Brian I. Weiss M.D., and others. These are languages that the patient never learned, or had any training or even significant exposure to in this life. Dr. Weiss has studied over 2000 patients over the past 20 years and has written four best-selling books on the subject.

How can such a thing be? There are many accounts of children sharing memories of things that their parents know they did not and could not have experienced in this life – memories of things that the children were too young to have learned – memories that were later researched and confirmed! The list of these types of events are too numerous to account. While all these accounts may not be airtight in every detail, many have withstood the scrutiny of doubters, time and research. Those who choose can easily research these accounts on the net, and decide what they believe

about them. There's a reported account of a young girl who claimed she was Anne Frank in a past life. Amazingly, this young girl was able to describe with great detail things only Anne Frank herself would know. Or the account of a very young boy who claims to have been a WWII pilot who was shot down and later provided important information regarding his death, including the location of his lost plane. Google it. These and many other accounts are there, researchable and available to be considered. There's enough of them that, even if a person does not believe any of these accounts, there's enough to cause the thinkers to pause. More than a few children, too young to have studied or learned, have shared memories of past lives in such detail that some have been verified historically. Others, under hypnosis, have memories of past lives and events – some of which are also historically verifiable. There are many books on this subject from a long list of respected medical doctors, psychiatrists and heads of university research departments around the country.

One that comes to mind is the book, *Does the Soul Survive?* by Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz. I found this book after I had already written the rough draft of this book, but during my edits, decided to add a mention of it and

to share an account or two from it. As Rabbi Elie Spitz interest in reincarnation grew he learned of a new source in New York, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin. I will share their encounter here from the book *Does the Soul Survive*. Please excuse the long quote, but because credibility is in the details, I felt it necessary. Rabbi Spitz states:

“As my interest in reincarnation grew, I learned of a new resource. A friend in New York, Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, had a videotape of a past-life regression that he had conducted with a young Jewish woman from the San Fernando Valley in California. I arranged a meeting with Telushkin, who trained as an Orthodox rabbi and currently makes his living as a successful writer of Jewish books, novels, and film scripts. Rabbi Telushkin had studied hypnosis years before and had used his skill mostly to help relieve friends of pain. However, a filmmaker friend encouraged rabbi Telushkin to hypnotize a subject so that they might explore together if past-life regression could be documented. The filmmaker offered to film the encounter.

Telushkin approached a friend to serve as the subject. The woman, in her mid-thirties, had proven to be a deep hypnotic/trance subject in the past. The woman agreed to participate as a favor but said that she was not interested in knowing the results. She said to Telushkin that it struck her as weird to think that she had lived before.

Rabbi Telushkin invited me to his home to view the videotape, which began with the woman already under hypnosis. In an interview format, responding to Telushkin's questions, she stated that she had just completed travel on the Oregon Trail. During her account, she was having trouble finding a suitable spouse because the men she met were so "refractory." She told Telushkin here naked and described herself as a twenty-three-year-old schoolteacher originally from Ithaca, New York. She explained that she was motivated to go to Oregon because of a pamphlet she had read, which she cited by name. She named the organizer of the wagon train, the man who led it, and the point of origin, Independence, Missouri. She also reported that she had kept a diary of her travels.

After the session, Telushkin, researched the Oregon Trail, finding resources as the New York Public Library and used bookstores. He was able to corroborate most of the names the subject had mentioned. He acquired a copy of the pamphlet she had named and even found corroboration of numerous details she had mentioned. It was clear that outside of hypnosis the subject knew nothing about the Oregon Trail and little of early American history. Telushkin was amazed by the results of this, his first past-life regression, and was glad to have a filmed record of the session.

I trusted Rabbi Telushkin, and he trusted that this woman knew little about the Oregon Trail. The subject's entire manner, her change in tone of voice, and the use of unusual idioms riveted my attention. I was impressed by the specificity of her account. In the end, I was most struck by Telushkin's corroboration of the woman's story through his research. When I had observed past-life regressions before, I wondered if the "memories" were not solely products of the imagination. However, if the details of this story, including specific names, were historically accurate, and if the subject

knew little if anything about the Oregon Trail, then the “memories” might really be memories and not products of the imagination.” *Does The Soul Survive*, by Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz, pages 62 – 64, © 2000 Elie Kaplan Spitz, published by Jewish Lights Publishing.

As if to put an explanation point on this, on page 126 of the same book, Rabbi Spitz further states:

“My initial exposure to Telushkin’s tape in the spring of 1997 had impressed me greatly. The woman he gegressed provided a detailed account of her experience on the Oregon Trail. As I mentioned, earlier, Telushkin verified the mames she provided of the wagon train organizer and the head of her wagon train. He identified a niteteenth century pamphlet that contained the text she had quoted. He even found a diary entry made by a woman with the name the subject had said was hers under hypnosis...” *Does The Soul Survive*, by Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz, page 126, © 2000 Elie Kaplan Spitz, published by Jewish Lights Publishing.

It's an 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. That's easier than looking at the facts. But when you have as many of these types of reports as we do today, an honest look into the holy 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.

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). I respect some of the other books and studies on soul survival and reincarnation, but most approach this topic primarily by listing personal accounts of individuals and/or accounts of their own and their professional research -or- by listing quotes from the Zohar, rabbinical commentary, the Talmud etc. I have chosen a different approach and different base support material. While mentioning a few of these same sources, my support comes overwhelmingly and purposely from Torah, Tanach and the B'rit Hadashah, i.e., the texts of our Bibles.

Some topics in the Bible are simply easier to discern and are more prevalent than others. While the Biblical evidence for this subject matter is extensive, it is not as directly stated as some topics. We're all still learning and this subject is no exception. But we do have some *very powerful substantiation* of past lives that is contained within the Bible. We each get to decide based upon the information and proofs we are exposed to, what we 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 readers to think honestly without the blinders of preconceived beliefs and a closed mind. Those who already "know" cannot learn.

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 understand scripture. Delving into God's word is compared to journeying into the garden of paradise. It is called the Pardes for Paradise. 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** = historical allegorical interpretation (midrash) or commentary. Even when a person does not agree with the commentary, this method still has the value of showing us what was understood in the past.
- **Samech for Sod** = Secrets. These are the hidden meanings of Torah and Tanach.

Together, these four methods called PARDES, provide great insight into the methodology of studying God's word.

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

Most are familiar with the famous play, *Fiddler On The Roof*. This musical play is a story 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, the father 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 tailor. It's all very entertaining. After hearing the pleas from his daughter, the father relents and then contrives a plan to spare his daughter this marriage. He begins to tell a tale of an incredible dream he had to his wife and the Jewish community. The dream is about the butcher's former wife coming back from the dead to prevent the marriage. The mother believes the dream and the marriage is off. Now romance with the tailor 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 many Jews.

There are more books written on the subject of *after death experiences* than I can mention. There is also an

innumerable amount of testimony 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. Since Messiah spoke of the subject reincarnation several times, we too ought to be comfortable discussing it.

Now let's get started. Many Christians discount the possibility of past lives, or any form of reincarnation, based upon the claim that mankind 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 the past and 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 up and His soul lived in 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).

To argue 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 is ludicrous, since there are many Biblical examples of people being raised up to live in the flesh more than once! 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.

First, let's 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 those who shared their life-after-death experiences with me 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. They just happened to them unsolicited.

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 or communicate with the dead – ever!

Biblical Jewish belief in reincarnation was 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 vigor 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 can be very insightful, and like much of the world's wisdom literature; it too has something to offer. Many people in the Christian community are deeply misled as to the contents of the Zohar and many other things within of Judaism. They have been led to believe it is something it is not. To many Christians, "chanting" is a form of emotional reputations with mystical powers like witchcraft. To a Jew, "chanting" is prayerfully singing the Holy scriptures and realizing the blessings it brings. To many Christians, the Zohar is a book of Jewish mysticism – which congers up images of mystics, teachings about mystical powers and some biblical teachings, almost like combining the bible with teachings of mediums. To most Jews, the Zohar is a book or rabbinical teaching exploring the deep mysteries, dual meanings and truths of the Bible. There is a real divergence in communication with

dialectal and linguistic variations that lead to misunderstandings.)

It is said that that the great kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria taught that the last generation before the coming of Moshiach is the reincarnation of the generation of the Exodus.

As I write, I recall that many of my Siddur's speak of the transmigrations of the soul. One example is found in *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, perhaps one of the most used siddurs available. It is used by synagogues and individuals worldwide. Notice the words of the famous bedtime Shema prayer:

Master of the universe, I hereby forgive anyone who angered or antagonized me or who sinned against me - whether against my body, my property, my honor or against anything of mine; whether he did so accidentally, whether in this transmigration or another transmigration..." Quoted from *The Complete Artscroll Siddur – Nusach Ashkenaz* © 1984, 2001 by Mesorah Publications ltd.

Let's now move to the more important support materials, directly from the word of God. Let's review potent passages regarding past lives from the Brit Hadashah (New Testament 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, and even the implicit teachings regarding transmigration of the soul from Rabbi Yeshua Himself.

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. Other people present believed John was one of the other prophets coming back to the flesh

from the dead. Such beliefs were common among the Jews of that day.

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 credibility to the subject matter as being something real and entirely possible for His people. Yeshua discussed it with His disciples as a normal and a reasonable discussion – something some get too emotionally charged to do today. 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! Rather, His comments seem to implicitly support 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 husband's brother? The account details this happening with each of seven successive brothers. Each time she married a brother, he 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 unanswered 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. 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?

All taken together, the beliefs of the disciples and Jews, as recorded in the Brit Hadashah (New Testament) appear to be in agreement with the later teachings in the Zohar. Notice:

Truly, all souls must undergo transmigration; but men do not perceive the ways of the Holy One, how the revolving scale is set up and men are judged every day at all times, and how they are brought up before the Tribunal, both before they enter into this world and after they leave it. They perceive not the many transmigrations and the many mysterious

works which the Holy One accomplishes with many naked souls, and how many naked spirits roam about, in the other world without being able to enter within the veil of the King's Palace. *Zohar III, 99b*

**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. Your 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.

BELIEF IN ANYFORM OF REINCARNATION STAMPED OUT BY THE CHURCH OF ROME

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, and later enforced, 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 when opposed by others?

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 BIBLICAL 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 occasionally be to pay for past sins, or to learn or contribute something to society, 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, babies have not yet had an opportunity to have sinned, the question only makes sense in-light of a possible past life.

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 a rabbi has stated that he believed 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 (the penalty) to cause one to be born blind in the next life.

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 – there could be many reasons and we simply don't know which one is the reason so we cannot judge others – but past sins are one possibility. For one person born with an infirmity, 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 who assist them. For another, it may be corrupted DNA or a severe trial or test. For another, it may be past sin. 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. That is a truth we should not ignore.

This seems like it would have been a 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, as have many other translations. 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 the soul sinned in a past life and thus was a sinner from conception in this life!

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's 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 repentant 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 eventually got to enter the Kingdom, but they enter the kingdom at a later time – after the repentant tax collector and harlots. Why would Messiah make that distinction, unless their actions actually mattered? The unrepentant would need a further opportunity to live again, repent so that they could 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. Adults cannot return to their mother's womb. It is only possible for infants who are re-born. 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! Certainly we cannot re-enter our mother's womb without being a baby again. Here's another:

Job 33:29-30

"God indeed does all these things, twice, three times, with mortals, to bring back their souls from the Pit, so that they may see the light of life.

NRSV

I know what “bring back their soul from the Pit” means – it is a reference to hell and death. Here righteous Elihu refers to the souls of mortals being brought back from the pit twice or three times. To be brought back from the Pit requires first being there – not merely being sick. In the context of the previous verse, the verbiage refers to being redeemed – literally meaning “brought back,” “to do again.” Consider it.

This is very similar to what Samuel said:

1 Sam 2:6

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

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 visit the words of the prophet Jeremiah and then return to Torah:

Jer 31:15-16

15 Thus says the LORD: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation *and* bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted for her children, because they *are* no more."

16 Thus says the LORD: "Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy."

Obviously Rachel died before her children, but was gathered to her people and now resides in Gan-Eden. Rachel’s weeping for her children seems much more than just a metaphor. In fact, it makes less sense as a metaphor than as accepting God’s words literally. Consider these points:

- Consider God’s response to Rachel’s tears. God not only comforts Rachel concerning her children, but He tells her that her prayerful work and tears will be rewarded (vs 16). That would make no sense if this were merely a metaphor, since as a metaphor, Rachel would not really have been weeping and praying, Israel would. There is no sign of Israel repenting nationally in Jeremiah’s day or since!
- If this were a metaphor for Israel weeping and reeling for being punished and exiled for their sins, then Jacob would have been named for he fathered all twelve tribes of Israel and represents all twelve tribes of Israel – Rachel was the mother of only two.
- We know this was not a metaphor for Jacob or Israel weeping but is speaking about Rachel specifically, because it mentions the area of Rachel’s burial – Ramah. Rachel was buried in the area of Ramah – not Jacob and certainly not the vast majority of Israel.
- Rachel was lamenting and weeping “because her children are no more” – meaning they were being killed, exiled and being buried in foreign lands. It makes no sense to say this is

a metaphor for Israel's own sorrows or for Ephraim's own sorrows, for Ephraim bemoans himself only two verses later (Jer 31:18) but without the verbiage "no more." If Israel or Ephraim was the one being sorrowful, then they would not be "no more." We know the term "no more" refers to death, for this prophecy was referenced in response to the death of all those under two years of age by Herod (Matt 2:17 – 18)!

Simple logic demands we accept the plain rendering of God's words. Trying to explain away the meaning by calling it only a metaphor makes no sense at all.

Let's consider this passage from Jeremiah in light of what was spoken about the Patriarchs in Torah. When Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses and Aaron die the same phrase is used at each of their deaths – "was gathered to his people." Surely this applies to Rachel as well. This is not a phrase that speaks of no existence, but of being regathered with one's family, relatives and people. As Rabbi Spitz points out;

"The expression gathered to his people" cannot refer to death itself, for the phrase already acknowledges that they died. It cannot refer to burial for it is often followed by a description of

burial. Nor is the phrase a reference to an ancestral grave, because Abraham, Ishmael, and Moses were each buried apart from their ancestors. *Does The Soul Survive*, by Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz, page 33, © 2000 Elie Kaplan Spitz, published by Jewish Lights Publishing.

When we accept the P'shat (the clear literal meaning of the text) of each of these texts, we have clarity and unanimity with the word of God. Consider also the words of our Master Potter:

Jer 18:1-7

The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying:

2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words."

3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the wheel.

4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, as the clay

is in the potter's hand, so *are* you in My hand,
O house of Israel!

God is plainly telling us that He can make more than one vessel out of us. One may say this is referring to Israel nationally as to leading them to repentance. Yes, but in Romans 9:17 – 21 the apostle Paul applies this same passage to us individually. He makes a clear point that God can make more than one vessel out of the *same lump* of clay and then applies this to a single man – Pharaoh. The interesting thing about pottery is that the flaws in the vessels they create do not show up until after the clay is put to the fire and set. At this point the vessel is complete. If the potter then finds fault in it, he has to grind it up to powdery dust, re-animate it and then form it anew. God said to Jeremiah He can make more than one vessel from each of us. If after the fiery trials of life, God is still not satisfied with His creation, He can form us anew. He does this with the “same lump” (Rom 9:21) – not a different lump. The same lump, same soul, same person – different vessel.

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. This too is proof all men are judged at death. This judgment is in addition to the final Great White Throne Judgment. 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 have lived more than once in the flesh! Heb 9:27 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 – a new 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 glorified 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, 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! Elijah will be re-incarnated! To be incarnate is to be put into flesh. To be re-incarnated is to be put into flesh again. God does that with Elijah. 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 three separate lives in the flesh, separated by thousands of years! Three? Yes. For those who can accept it, the words of Messiah show us plainly that Elijah has already had at least two past lives with one more to come. 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 each man has been imbued by God with his own personal spirit and the spirit gives life to the soul, how can it be that someone could come with someone else's spirit? For it is the spirit of a man that makes the man (Job 32:8, 1 Cor 2:11).

Can we really come with the spirit of another person? Which is easier to believe? Yeshua said plainly that John WAS the Elijah to come. The only way for that statement to be true is for Elijah to be re-born – reincarnated. John the Immerser was Elijah's second known life in the flesh. But Elijah is yet to come again – one more time – that would be at least three!

The prophet Malachi did not prophesy that someone would come and do a similar work or preach a similar message in the spirit of Elijah's. He stated plainly, Elijah would come again. God promised Elijah would come again before the seventh trump, before any mass

resurrection to physical or spirit bodies! The question is: Do we believe Messiah meant what He said?

THE PEOPLE WERE RIGHT

Remember 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. They sensed it. They were expecting it, and Yeshua said they were right! This too is a powerful point. Messiah Himself said John was Elijah come again, and He knew John was born – not resurrected. The Jews were right.

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? Can you receive it?

There is no doubt that the context of Elijah's return in Malachi was only fulfilled in part through John the Immerser. This is why most Christians still believe

Elijah will yet return again. That then, would be Elijah's third time in the flesh – with at least two of those fleshly lives being by birth!

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.

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 new physical body).

Is reincarnation necessary for salvation? No.

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

Let's now review two more powerful passages regarding transmigration of the soul. They are from the words of Yeshua Himself.

Matt 26:63-64

63 But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, "I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64 Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Consider the logic of Messiah's statement. How could the high priest see these things unless he were reincarnated, for they take place before his resurrection. Messiah said, "hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power..." This appears to be a reference to the 6th Seal of Rev 6:15 – 17 – clearly this takes place BEFORE the resurrection, which happens at the conclusion of the 7th seal and the conclusion of the seven trumpet blasts. Messiah also told this high priest he would see the Son of Man coming on the clouds. Since we know that only the righteous first-fruits – the believers – will be resurrected at the seventh trumpet, this unbelieving high priest would not yet be alive except by reincarnation! There's more:

Rev 1:7

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him.
And all the tribes of the earth will mourn
because of Him. Even so, Amen.

Here Yeshua specifically mentions "every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him". How can those unconverted who pierced Him, many of which fought against Him and His teachings until their deaths, be around again to see Messiah's return, unless they were reincarnated? It's simple logic. There's no other way for this passage to be true. Even if one maintains that those who pierced Him could be resurrected with the

first fruits and thus see Him return, the timing and logic still does not fit the saints who have died in Messiah and return with Him (1 Thess 4:14). Only those saints who are alive at Messiah's return will see Him coming on the clouds – not those who died two thousand years ago – saints or not! From a point of view, there is a big difference between the perspective of looking up and seeing someone “coming” and following Him at His return (Rev 19:14, Ps 149). These passages are clear proof of reincarnation. But as Messiah said, not all are able to receive it. Can you accept God's words?

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? It seems 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.