

vironment. People claiming to be born with knowledge or skills from a “past life” are usually those who believe strongly in reincarnation or receive supernatural ability from demons (Acts 16:16).

The Bible does not teach that parents are taking care of some previous life’s souls repackaged as their children, but that people are actually creating life: “Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living” (Gen 3:20). The Bible spends many chapters on genealogies and nations. Numerous descendants are a blessing, not a recycling project.

Is Reincarnation in the Bible?

Unfortunately, some reincarnation teachers treat the Bible like their own vague literature and find verses that they interpret as a primitive people struggling to understand reincarnation. Every example this writer found of such teaching showed a total lack of trying to understand the verse in its context or as explained by other verses.

The expression “you are gods” (John 10:34) has been used as proof of reincarnation from god to man to god to man, etc. However, it is a quote from Psalm 82:6: “I said, ‘You *are* gods, And all of you *are* children of the Most High” (NKJV). This is clearly about the reward of men becoming children of God frequently mentioned in the New Testament; it is an upward, not a cyclic process.

Reincarnationists claim that these and other Scriptures show life is a “karmic path” with everyone’s destiny set: “...for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matt 26:52); “A man reaps what he sows” (Gal 6:7). “Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again” (Eccl 1:7); “The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be;...and there is no new thing under the sun” (Eccl 1:9); “That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been” (Eccl 3:15). These are simply various general principles about human behavior or physical reality. There are exceptions to every one of them in the Bible (a

king lived by the sword and did not die by the sword, God once said a “new thing” happened, etc.). Whereas, thousands of verses talk about decisions that people made, and consequences that came about specifically because of their decision.

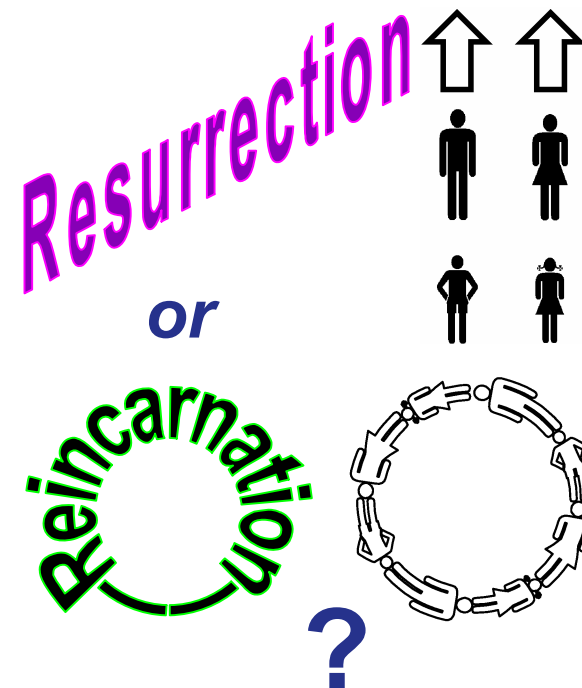
Do Bible stories of resurrections in this life support reincarnation? (1Kngs 7:22; Matt 9:18-25; John 11:44; Matt 27:52-53; Acts 9:20). No. All these people came back to life **as themselves**, and none said, “What? I’m in this body again?” Similarly the biblical concept of being “born again” is a rebirth in the spirit **as oneself**, not somebody else.

The Bible does say that “Elijah” would come preparing the way for Christ (Mali 4:5), and that John the Baptist fulfilled that role (Matt 17:12-13). Was John a reincarnation of Elijah? No, Luke 1:17 shows that John had the same function as Elijah. However, Herod, the non-Christian king, did think that Jesus might be John the Baptist returned from the dead (Matt 14:1-2). Even today, reincarnation ideas are found among Christians. Some teach that deceased believers become angels, which may then pose as humans and again interact with people on earth. The Bible does not teach this, but gives a long list of the righteous (Heb 11), then says:

These [righteous men and women] were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised. God had planned something better for us so that only **together with us** would they be made perfect (Heb 11:39-40).

Reincarnation is probably the best explanation that man can find for life, without revelation from God. Reincarnation and related philosophies often help people learn to live at peace with things they cannot change. But these ideas fail to teach people how they can have the power of the God of the universe inside them, so He can change them into His children, to forever dwell in peace with Him!

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Many people today believe in some form of **reincarnation**. It is a central teaching of Hinduism, Buddhism and other Eastern religions. It has made its way into Western ideas. The teaching has many names and variations, but essentially reincarnation is the belief that the soul (or spirit) migrates from body to body—when a body dies, its soul departs, to inhabit another body later. Reincarnation usually includes the belief that souls progress to higher states as they learn lessons, but also teaches that most people are born not knowing who they “were” in “past lives” and that they probably will not remember the events of this life in their “next life”.

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches **resurrection**. It teaches that people will be raised from the dead, will know who they are, and will be responsible for what they did on this earth. Notice:

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, so Christ was sacrificed

continued inside...

once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him (Heb 9:27-28).

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken (Matt 12:36).

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad (2Cor 5:10).

There are many other Bible verses that say similar things. The message is clear that there will be a resurrection of the dead and everyone will be judged—both believers and unbelievers. Many people know little about God or his ways, and many people do not even do whatever it is that they believe to be right (see Rom 2:13-16). They will be rewarded for what they did right and corrected for what they did wrong.

The person who believes in Christ can now recognize his or her sin, repent and be forgiven, “If we confess our sins, he [Christ] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1Jn 1:9). We can also avoid judgment by examining ourselves now: “But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment” (1Cor 11:31). But if you have known a lot of Christians for a long time, you probably know some who have sinned. Christ continually corrects and perfects believers in this life (John 16:13; Phil 1:6; Heb 11:40) so they can become like God: “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48). He will work with believers in a variety of ways when he returns (Luke 12:42-48). But the ultimate rewards promised to mortal men and women who follow God are truly awesome:

...“What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor” (Heb 2:6-7).

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But

we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1Jn 3:2).

Indeed, the future potential of each person is so great that it is hard for us to understand now:

However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—**but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit**. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God (1Cor 2:9-10).

I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows—was caught up to paradise. He heard inexpressible things, things that man is not permitted to tell (2Cor 12:2-4).

Just because we cannot fully understand our future potential does not mean that we can understand none of it. Believers will have bodies that can eat and drink, and a clear role implementing a wonderful environment for everyone.

...so that you [the 12 apostles] may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Luke 22:30).

Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat upon them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes” (Rev 7:15-17)

Purpose vs. Pointlessness

The Bible consistently teaches an upward movement that God perfects humans so that they can live and reign with Him, to receive greater power and glory. Reincarnation teaches a continual cycle of souls living lives, only to be recycled again and live more lives—all part of a grand cos-

mic design, but a design that nobody understands.

The Bible claims to contain the words of the very God that formed the universe. It promises the Holy Spirit to give wisdom and knowledge of spiritual things. Anyone can read the Bible or come to God and ask for His spirit to understand.

Is there any authoritative source of information on reincarnation? No. There are thousands of “teachers” who have taught many things over thousands of years. They cannot agree even upon which entities are involved in reincarnation. Some teach human souls are reincarnated only into other humans. Others teach they may be reincarnated into any mammal. Others include birds, fish, insects, even bacteria. Still others include plants, aliens on other planets, spiritual beings and ethereal beings (somewhere in between physical and spiritual). Some teach that the entire universe is a reincarnation of previous universes.

Reincarnation Defies Science

The Bible clearly states that new life originates from the sexual union of a man and a woman (Adam, Eve and Jesus being the only exceptions). Science shows that a person’s genes are inherited from their parents. A common belief of reincarnationists is that the soul that is to “inhabit” a newborn determines or selects that newborn’s characteristics. This is scientifically false. Each woman is born with about 400 immature ova—each one representing a possible child that she could have. The genetic material she will contribute to her children was already set when she was born—it is not determined later by some disembodied soul.

The father’s characteristics are contributed to the child through sperm, which he produces continually. But with modern genetics, the possibility of **humans** selecting a specific sperm cell for its genetic content is becoming real. If birth were merely the process of reincarnating a soul, it could be done with only mothers—no need for fathers.

Nearly all of a person’s characteristics can be scientifically shown to come from heredity or en-