

REINCARNATION: An Investigation through the Bible, Science and Experience (work in progress)

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INTRODUCTION

I'm placing the following personal facts on the record not because my ego requires it but because this kind of data *does* matter to certain people — especially those who would like to relegate the topic of reincarnation (also known as “past lives” or “the journey of the soul”) to the realm of sidewalk psychics, avant-garde movie stars, or those “who aren't biblically grounded” or “don't know Jesus”:

- I have a B.A. in anthropology and a Phi Beta Kappa key.
- I have a master's degree from a well-regarded evangelical seminary — where I graduated first in my class and was the top biblical interpretation student.
- I have a second MA (with highest honors) from one of the top 11 grad schools in the world for international studies.
- I was one of 850 students (out of 9,100 nominated by their graduate and law schools) selected for a Presidential Management Fellowship in 2011.

In short, **my academic record flies** in the face of typical misperceptions about reincarnation proponents. So, whether or not you choose to dismiss the idea of reincarnation after reviewing the evidence, you probably won't be able do so (or, at least, not credibly) by dismissing my **credentials**. And then there is my spiritual background ...

For 40 years, I was what one might call a “**card-carrying, seminary-trained, evangelical Christian**” until thorough research revealed that all those who devoutly follow traditional religions (i.e., anything that goes much beyond belief in, gratitude toward, and connection with an ultimate Creator) are victims of centuries of (1) biblical, scientific and historical ignorance and (2) willful manipulation and control by ancient political and religious power structures. As for those Christian readers who are wondering about Jesus ...

Since early childhood, I have known Jesus as a real person, friend and mentor. I knew his voice, his character, and how he led me. I still know him; he still teaches and encourages me. In fact, he's the one who said to me (when, in shock at what I was discovering when I began researching reincarnation, I asked for help and correction if on the wrong path):

“Don't worry about whether anyone else [especially from the evangelical Christian camp] is with you on this. Reincarnation will become a big issue in the church in the next decade, and you need to be ready to help people.”

Until the summer of 2007, I had never investigated reincarnation, and the few ideas I had about it were largely shaped by disparaging comments and attitudes I occasionally encountered from institutional Christendom and the mainstream media.

However, there was a part of me that was drawn to the topic (even though fear kept me from pursuing it, as I'd been told by one well-meaning Christian counselor that my dreams were probably connected to “demonic deception”). You see, from very early childhood I had a recurring nightmare ...

I was standing on a barren hillside underneath a horizontal wooden beam, several ropes extending down from it. Next to me was a man dressed in what I later found out was a Nazi SS officer's uniform. As he placed a noose around my neck, others behind me prepared to pull me up by the neck (I was not going to be dropped through a gallows or pushed off a chair—a fact I recently discovered was the way women resisters frequently were executed by the Nazis, as it took much longer to die). Then I defiantly exclaimed, *“You won't be able to kill me, because I'm leaving now!”* At that point, I always woke up.

So what was so unusual about my dream? I began having it (and other nightmares — about ominous WWII-era trains and snarling, leaping German Shepherds) in the mid- to late 1950s—when I was a small child, **years before I ever heard about the Holocaust, Nazis, etc.** Neither the Holocaust nor World War II was discussed at home, and the only thing I had ever seen on TV was “The Mickey Mouse Club,” Roy Rogers' TV show, and “The Lone Ranger.” In fact, when I did learn about the Holocaust in 4th or 5th grade — and was bemused at the horrified reactions of my classmates to the grainy films about the death camps that we watched, I remember thinking: “Of course ... I've always known about it.”

* * *

In May 2007, a nationwide 40-day fast on behalf of America's young people was proclaimed by the college ministry “The Call” and several other prayer-oriented groups. I decided to participate. Frankly, I had never done more than a handful of fasts in my entire life ... and never for more than three days. (This was a limited fast, as my workload and family responsibilities made it impossible to do otherwise.). While I was fasting and praying on behalf of my own children, I also had the strange feeling that it would accomplish other purposes.

In July 2007, at the conclusion of the fast, I drove up to the Josef Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver one evening to attend a discussion of Israel's predicament in light of recent events in Gaza. During the Q&A session at the end,

I got up to counter some of the blatantly one-sided anti-Israel sentiments that had been voiced.

Before I did, the room was heavy with a spirit of confusion and intimidation—especially since there were a number of vocal Palestinian activists in the audience. After I politely but firmly confronted the two professors about their perpetuation of revisionist history, however, applause broke out. Afterward, a Jewish man, William, was very insistent that we get together to talk ... he said it was very important.

Several weeks later, William and I met for lunch. The conversation was fascinating, as he's a very bright man—an attorney and political activist. He asked why I have such a passion for Israel and the Jewish people ... and why I was willing to risk the disdain, even hostility, of the liberal professors and Palestinian activists in the audience, in order to defend Israel. I told him about reading Leon Uris' book *Exodus* when I was 11 years old, and the fire that erupted in my heart as a result.

He then asked an odd question, “So how do you feel about the Holocaust?” It seemed like a total *non sequitur*; after all, wasn't that already clear from everything I'd said? Without thinking, I found myself telling him about my childhood dream, and was shocked to see his eyes fill with tears.

Then William asked, “Have you heard about the worldwide phenomenon of Holocaust victims—especially children—who have been reborn as Gentile Christians?” (*NOTE: This is widely documented, and there are two books by Orthodox Rabbi Yonassan Gershom on the subject.*)

I was kind but firm as I said, “William, I'm a Bible-believing Christian. I don't believe in reincarnation.”

“Why not?” he asked. “Have you ever researched it?”

I had to admit I had not.

“Are you willing to?” he asked.

Immediately, I knew in my gut (my spirit) that this was something I was supposed to do. And thus started an incredible journey into realms of mind and spirit that I could never before have imagined exploring. I fully expected to do a few hours of work and then send my refutation to William. Instead, a few hours of research on the Internet, along with doing a word study on Hebrews 9:27 (the only verse that anyone ever quotes as a supposed refutation of the idea of reincarnation), started demolishing certain doctrinal and traditional paradigms I had placidly accepted for decades.

To date, I've spent countless hours in research, including reading more than 40 books and going back and forth through the Bible. I began seeing a top regression therapist in Denver to investigate, for myself, the validity (or lack thereof) of this emerging field. I

not only uncovered the truth about my childhood dreams but other past-life memories with specific details previously unknown to me (but which I've been able to corroborate through online research). Most important, the sessions were powerfully healing on a level that much prayer and many counseling sessions over decades of time had never reached.

Specifically, one life that finally surfaced (not surprisingly, given my childhood nightmares and what experts like University of Virginia psychiatrist Jim Tucker and psychologist and author Carol Bowman have revealed about children's past-life memories) was as a young French Jewish woman from Paris—daughter of a rabbi, married to a Gentile Sorbonne University professor, and mother of a 3-year-old daughter named Monique.

I was betrayed by my mother-in-law, who told my husband that she had made arrangements for Monique and me to be hidden in a small town outside of Paris, as our continued presence (with deportations of French Jews escalating daily) was endangering everyone. Unbeknownst to my husband, however, after dropping off Monique at an orphanage in the countryside that was sheltering Jewish children, his mother had made other arrangements for me.

Instead of being taken to another refuge, I was delivered to a town square with cobblestone streets, next to a railroad track ... where Nazi officers were rounding up Jews and deporting them to Auschwitz. I was transported to Auschwitz itself; then, sometime later, I was transferred to a work detail in the Birkenau section. My horrific experiences in Auschwitz had transformed me, in a sense, so that there was no longer anything that I feared. All that was left was a burning desire to thwart the Nazis' horrific goals in any way I could.

So, in my barracks at night, I would talk about God — how the Creator would not let the Nazis win, and that the Americans would be coming soon. But when a starving woman reported me in order to get food, I was driven outside the camp in an open truck with one or two other people on a beautiful late spring or early summer day and hung in front of an audience of prisoners.

To revisit a past life is powerfully healing when the love of the Creator enters the memories, resolves trauma, and brings forgiveness (both for oneself and for others). I've noticed profound changes in the years since: a number of chronic anxieties, negative tendencies and sensitivities have fallen away. There's more work to do, of course, but it's a journey I intend to continue.

I've continually asked for wisdom and direction, and the Creator has confirmed this path for me. This topic (reincarnation, past lives, the journey of the soul—whatever you want to call it) will become a front-burner one in religious institutions in our lifetime ... and the wave of change is beginning to take shape.

* * *

Now for a brief look at some vitally important church history and then a more extensive look at what the Bible has to say ...

Long story short, the truth about reincarnation/past lives was pretty universally accepted in biblical Judaism (except among the Sadducees, who didn't believe in any kind of afterlife) and apostolic Christianity. But in 553 B.C., a key (and very unsavory) event took place that all but buried the truth (more on that in a moment).

The common objection raised by Bible-believing Christians to the idea of reincarnation is based on one verse, and one verse only: Hebrews 9:27. Unfortunately (as with a number of other verses in the Bible), our over-reliance on the perceived perfection of our translations¹ has concealed what this verse really says.

Whether read in the KJV, NIV, NASV or any other of the major English translations, here is how Hebrews 9:27 is commonly translated:

It is appointed² unto men³ once⁴ to die⁵, and after this [the] judgment⁶.

But even a layperson, using a good concordance and applying the principle of the importance of the larger context to the proper interpretation of a passage, quickly discovers that the correct translation and interpretation are as follows:

"Everyone dies, and after this comes a debriefing [a life review in order to plan the next one]." (Hebrews 9:27)

The Bible contains a number of accounts of people who died *more* than once (in the same body, generally; although the soul that lived in both Elijah and John the Baptist had two different body lives recorded in Scripture)—so that truth alone should make it clear that Hebrews 9:27 cannot be interpreted in an absolute sense.

¹ I'm not talking about the integrity of the original manuscripts, of which we have none—only some early copies from several hundred years later.

² Strong's 606, *apokeimai* = to be reserved, fig. "to await," be appointed, (be) laid up.

³ Strong's 444, *anthropos* = human being.

⁴ Strong's 530, *hapax* = one time—either in the sense of numerically **or in the sense of conclusively**; according to Strong's, "prob. from 537 hapas, [meaning] **absolutely all, every one, all things**." (Emphasis added.)

⁵ Strong's 599, *apothnesko* = to die off (lit. or fig), to die.

⁶ Strong's 2920, *krisis* = decision (for or against), by implication a tribunal, justice. NOTE: This is not the Greek word used in all passages for the "end of days," final judgment of humankind—thus lending even more credence to the idea that it's the "life review" and debriefing—recounted by thousands of people during hypnotherapy, independently and yet with virtually identical details—that goes on in the interlife (between lives) that is in view here.

In fact, the translation is based on preconceived paradigms *imposed* on the text, not on sound principles of biblical interpretation. The interpretation we've inherited results from the centuries-long perpetuation of an illegal Church council's ruling, dating from 553 A.D., that reincarnation was not to be part of the Church's "dogma."⁷ Very few even know about this bit of history; fewer still know the background of this ruling.

Specifically, "The Roman Emperor Constantine married his way into power. His wife mysteriously disappeared. His second wife was his ticket to the throne. Then he had her killed. His third wife was a prostitute who had risen to the throne in the same diabolical ways Constantine had and who lived to have a devastating effect on the belief in reincarnation. She feared that her sins would follow from lifetime to lifetime infuriated her. She did not like the idea of karma. Her life was filled with lies and treachery. She was not interested in advocated any religion that would demote her in another life. Thus she persuaded Emperor Constantine to remove reincarnation from Christianity."⁸

This action was engineered by **the empress** and her various ecclesiastical henchmen, who imprisoned the elderly then-pope (when he refused to summon the council) and consequently had him sent to a forced-labor camp for six months until he agreed to sign the illegitimate council's rulings. It was also at that time that almost all the writings of the renowned Origen, a "Church Father" who wrote about the truth of reincarnation (among other things), were systematically collected and burned. We only know about his teachings because of a few manuscripts left plus many references to his work in the writings of other "Church Fathers."

The idea that the soul would go through many lifetimes on its journey toward relationship with God (and that salvation was not dependent on obeying the manmade dictates of an increasingly corrupt church system but was a millennia-long process of experiencing many lives with "debriefings" with spiritual elders in between ... as a means of returning to oneness with the Creator, the One, and with each other) was simply too dangerous to the power-hungry **empress'** schemes to be allowed. And thus, we are all victims of our ignorance of church history, including the corruption and oppression brought in by the Roman Catholic Church from non-Hebraic cultures and traditions.

But as I'm fond of saying, "Luther started the Reformation ... he didn't finish it."

Now, back to Hebrews 9:27 ...

⁷ Lest anyone think that Bible translation committees are filled with men who are infallible and free from any doctrinal bias (an idealistic but naïve view), let me assure you that what I found out during seminary days showed me otherwise. In communication with members of the translation board for the NIV about their inaccurate (and chauvinistic) translation of the Greek word *anthropos* (human being) as "man/men," they admitted to me in a letter that it was *not* the most accurate translation but, rather, their "preference"). This alone should motivate all of us to do our own homework when we have questions about Scripture. One does not need to have any proficiency at all in Greek or Hebrew to do some fascinating studies with the use of a good concordance, Bible dictionary and even certain historical records by live observers such as Josephus.

⁸ From http://kuriakon00.tripod.com/reincarnation/kuriakon_reincarnation.htm

How one translates any verse is supposed to depend on the larger context in which it occurs; the possibility of multiple meanings for the particular Greek or Hebrew word; the existence of other words (if any) that would have been more appropriate for the author to use if a very specific, limited meaning were desired; the most likely understanding that its original readers would have had; and what the totality of Scripture as to say on the topic.

(This is what it means to practice *biblical theology*—meaning that all other verses are harmonized with each other and the verse in question.) Anything else is a mere intellectual exercise at best, and error at worst.

So, to reiterate, a correct interpretation of Hebrews 9:27 is not possible without evaluating:

- Context
- Possibility of multiple meanings
- Word choice
- Original readers' understanding
- Totality of scriptural teaching

The CONTEXT of Hebrews 9:27 is a discussion about whether Christ's sacrificial death paid the price for sin conclusively, without question, for all time (as contrasted with the prior animal sacrifices in the temple that had to be repeated—both yearly for the nation as a whole and individually, whenever sins were committed). The answer given **in Hebrews** is that absolutely, conclusively, Christ's sacrifice reaches across time to effect full payment for sin (a "falling short"). There is no doubt.

Similarly, Hebrews makes the point that there is no doubt that death is a part of the human experience. Thus the verse says, "It is appointed unto men [the word actually means human beings] to die ..." i.e., it's part of the regular human experience. Our bodies wear out. Before the worldwide flood and related cataclysm, they lasted a lot longer (many hundreds of years).

This was partially due to the removal of the protective water canopy around the Earth **that existed until the Cataclysm (which included the Flood of Noah's Ark fame). It also was due to genetic, environmental and planetary (orbit) factors. While this information has been suppressed since the time of Emperor Constantine (early centuries A.D.), the fact is that Homo sapiens was (and is) a hybrid created from Earth hominid DNA combined with the DNA of extraterrestrial humanoid colonizers from the planet Nibiru—a planet far beyond Pluto that is actually part of our solar system.**⁹

The Nibiruan life cycle was one of thousands of years (due to Nibiru's very long, elliptical orbit and entirely different living conditions). Therefore, the initial Nibiruan

⁹ This part of our history is extensively documented on hundreds of clay tablets from the ancient civilization of Sumer—a phenomenon that the late Jewish scholar and Sumerian linguist Zecharia Sitchin devoted his life to publicizing (you can get his books on Amazon).

colonizers and the species (*Homo sapiens*) that their medical officers created to work in the Nibiruan gold mines and agricultural enterprises lived very long lives at first¹⁰—but their lives quickly shortened over generations as Earth’s much faster, shorter orbit and different environment took its toll.

Back to Hebrews 9: While the corruption and disintegration of our temporary, incarnate “packaging” is an accepted fact of life, there have been at least two notable exceptions to that rule (which we’ll note when we discuss the totality of scriptural teaching).

The POSSIBILITY OF MULTIPLE MEANINGS is crucially important when we seek to accurately understand the author's meaning for the word *hapax*, commonly (and **erroneously, in this context**) translated “once.” As noted in footnote 3, *hapax* has two possible meanings—either “once” (numerically) or “absolutely, conclusively, every one.”

You see, in Hebrews 9 the author asserted that (1) just as it is conclusively, absolutely true that Jesus’ sacrifice has “put away sin” for all time, and (2) just as it is conclusively, absolutely true that human beings die (our temporary dwellings/bodies, not our souls), so it is also conclusively, absolutely true that “Christ shall appear a second time without sin to those expecting him for salvation” (v. 28). *In other words, the whole discussion here has nothing whatsoever to do with reincarnation or the number of times a human soul might incarnate.*

The WORD CHOICE in Hebrews 9:27 also negates the traditional (post-553 A.D., that is) translation of *hapax* as “once” (numerically). If the author had intended that numeric interpretation, there would have been a better, more accurate choice: *ephapax*¹¹, meaning “**upon one occasion only.**” But the author did *not* choose *ephapax*, **because that was not the meaning intended.**

The ORIGINAL READERS would have seen *hapax* (conclusively, unavoidable) in the text rather than *ephapax* and known clearly what was meant. They would not have seen this as a refutation of reincarnation in any way whatsoever.

Another very strong argument against the idea that Hebrew 9:27 teaches that people can only die once is the TOTALITY OF SCRIPTURAL TEACHING. Numerous people were raised from the dead in Scripture, and so had at least two recorded deaths for just one lifetime.

And we have two who never died at all (at least, not in the conventional sense here on earth). Enoch “walked with God” in such a pleasing way that he was “taken” *without* experiencing physical death. Ditto with Elijah the Prophet. However, the soul of Elijah was reborn as John the Baptist (Jesus makes it *very* clear in Matthew 11:14 that the soul in John the Baptist *was* the reincarnated soul of Elijah), and John the Baptist died.

¹⁰ Methuselah (who, according to the book of Genesis, lived more than 900 years), was an example of the much longer initial lifespans of human beings.

¹¹ Strong’s 2178.

Moreover, the Bible says that Elijah (the soul that was embodied in both Elijah *and* John the Baptist) will be returning again (in a new body/*persona*), just prior to the prophesied “second coming” of Jesus. In other words, there are obviously multiple lives and multiple deaths going on with at least one of these souls.

When Jesus asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” *they responded with the names of several already-dead prophets*. Obviously, they (or at least the people they were quoting) believed that Jesus could be the soul of one of those men, reborn in a new body.

What’s crucial here is Jesus’ response: Did he correct them by saying, “That’s ridiculous! How could I be Jeremiah (or Elijah or whomever) reborn?” *No*. Rather, he explained who he really was.

When we look at Numbers 14:18 and Deuteronomy 5:9 (translated, “visiting the iniquity of fathers on children, and on the third and on the fourth ‘generation’ of those that hate me,”), we again see plenty of room for an understanding of reincarnation within the Bible.

The Hebrew word translated “generation,” *dowr*¹², means “a revolution of time ... also a **dwelling**.” The latter is especially significant, as our human bodies are characterized in Scripture as temporary dwellings. So with this understanding, it is consistent with sound interpretation to also translate this verse, “... on the third and fourth **incarnation** (bodily dwelling) of those who hate me.”

Mark 12:26: Now about the dead rising **again** [*egeiro*]¹³, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how Yahweh said to him, ‘I am the god [ruler] of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’?

This verse, when correctly translated, clearly speaks of multiple “risings” or lives. That’s why Jesus is saying that God **is** the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—because their souls were not off somewhere in “heaven” (disincarnate life) or asleep until “judgment day,” but living in new bodies.

It’s important to note that of the verses in the New Testament containing the word “resurrection,” all but two of them (Matthew 27:53—referencing Jesus’ resurrection, and Philippians 3:11¹⁴—referencing the final resurrection from the dead) contain the Greek word **egeiro**—speak of “rising again” (the soul in a new body/*persona*), not a one-time resurrection.

¹² Strong’s 1755.

¹³ Strong’s 1453, *egeiro*—raised **again**, rise **again**, rear up (**again**). (Emphasis added.)

¹⁴ Strong’s 1815, *exanistemi* = to produce, beget, arise—a rising from death.

Moreover, in all the verses in the New Testament where the word “resurrection” appears, it is the translation (or mistranslation) of the Greek word *anastasis*¹⁵—which can mean either “resurrection” or a “rising **again**.” (*Emphasis added.*) There are multiple verses¹⁶ that contradict a superficial understanding of Hebrews 9:27, teach the preexistence of souls from the dawn of creation, and make it clear that Jesus accepted the truth of reincarnation.

Again, every time Jesus was given an opportunity to refute it (when his disciples clearly were using it as a prior understanding to ask him a question), he never did. (Yet he certainly never hesitated to immediately correct error when he encountered it.) So, if the idea of reincarnation was erroneous, he would certainly have corrected those who believed in it.

Luke 20:37—“But that the dead are raised *again*¹⁷ [the original Greek word speaks of re-embodiment, not a final resurrection] ...”

John 9:1-3 (the story of the healing of the man born blind)—Jesus’s disciples asked, “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

Now, how in the world can an unborn baby sin so as to incur the penalty of blindness? He can’t. No one would claim that. But it was commonly understood, through the principle of “reaping and sowing,” that actions, whether positive or negative, are “harvested” (reap consequences) in future lives.

Again, Jesus’s response is illuminating. Did he correct the disciples by either asking, “How in the world could an unborn baby sin?” or, “You obviously are referring to the idea of reincarnation ... that is an error!” *No*.

Rather, he said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned. Rather, this happened that God might be glorified.” (The man was born blind—in fact, may very likely have volunteered in his “interlife” planning session to be born blind—so that Jesus would have the opportunity to heal him. There is abundant data in the past-life research done so far to indicate that we are able to choose a great deal about the details and circumstances of our next life. We are never victims.)

Matthew 19:27-28 says:

“Then Peter . . . said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that **in the regeneration**,

¹⁵ Strong's 386, from 450 *anistemi*, “to stand up, raise up (again), rise (again).”

¹⁶ Including, but definitely not limited to, Numbers 14:18 (“generations” can also be understood as “incarnations”—an interpretation supported by Deuteronomy 24:16); Jeremiah 1:4-5, Matthew 11:14; Luke 1:41, 44; John 9:1-3, Romans 9:11-13, Ephesians 1:4, and Revelation 3:12.

¹⁷ Strong's 1453, *egeiro*—raised **again**, rise **again**, rear up (**again**).

when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

The Greek word translated "regeneration" is *paliggenesia*. Wuest's *Word Studies from the Greek New Testament* (pp. 89-90) says of *paliggenesia*:

"In some passages the word means revivification and only that. In the Pythagorean [a school of Greek philosophy] doctrine of the transmigration of souls [reincarnation], their reappearance in new bodies was called their *paliggenesia*. The Stoics used this word to speak of the periodic renovation of the earth in the springtime **when it budded and blossomed again**, awaking from its winter sleep, and in a sense, revived from its winter death. . . .

"The word *paliggenesia* is made up of the Greek word[s] *palin* and *genesis*. *Palin* is a Greek word meaning "**back again**." *Genesis* is a noun used in the N.T., in the sense of "origin, race, **birth**." **It is rendered birth in Mt. 1:18. . . . The word *paliggenesia* therefore means to be born again.**" (Emphasis added.)

What's important is that there is nothing in the Bible to warrant **putting a supernatural or spiritual interpretation on** the phrase "to be born again." It was meant to be understood *literally*. (It was the mechanism of reincarnation that mystified Nicodemus in John 3, not its reality.) So even though institutional Christianity has completely spiritualized the "born again" phrase in John 3:3 in order to allege the necessity of a spiritual rebirth, the spiritualized interpretation—in the context of the entire Bible's discussions of life, death and rebirth—is unsupportable.

In Matthew 19, Jesus answered Peter's question by saying, in essence, "You won't rule and reign with me in this incarnation; but in a future incarnation, you will. And you'll not only be richly rewarded at that time for what you've had to forego and forsake at this time—but you will also inherit eternal life."

Some would make the argument, "He's not talking about their future re-embodiment but their ruling with him in His earthly kingdom once they've been resurrected." However, the Greek word used for resurrection (with its everlasting transformed body), *anastasis*, is not used here. So that argument doesn't fly.

Matthew 22:31-32: Jesus is clearly speaking of reincarnation. Otherwise, the passage makes no sense.

See also Mark 9:11-13 and Matthew 11:9-15. (Jesus made it clear that the person of John the Baptist had the spirit/soul of Elijah).

And Revelation 3:12 is one of the strongest verses in support of reincarnation/the journey of the soul. Here we have the resurrected (or ascended) Jesus speaking to the apostle John:

“The (one) overcoming, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, **and he shall not go out any more.**” (*Emphasis added.*)

If each of us only enters the heavenly realms (otherwise known as the “interlife”) once, then why in the world would Jesus make a comment about not having to “go out any more”? Why, indeed, would this be couched as some kind of promise/reward to look forward to? It makes *no sense* if one takes the stance that the soul has only one earthly life.

However, when this verse is seen through the lens of the truth of the “journey of the soul” through multiple lifetimes, it makes perfect sense!

After all, who are overcomers? The Bible itself tells us: those who “overcome” or master the difficulties and challenges of incarnate life. In other words, once a soul completes the lessons of earthly existence, finishes reaping everything that was sown, and has returned to oneness with the Creator the way Jesus said he was (is) one, the cycle of rebirth comes to an end. This is to be welcomed, not feared. Compared to the greater knowledge, peace and freedom of the interlife (or heaven, if you prefer), being an embodied soul is like being encased in a bomb suit.

The soul **can** volunteer to return (as has Elijah has done, and will do again, and as certain others have done), out of love for God and humanity (to fulfill certain service assignments), **but it no longer has to**. The debt is paid, the journey back to full union God is completed. But learning and soul evolution never ends.

* * *

OTHER BIBLE VERSES (NASV)

Ecclesiastes 12:6-7

Remember him [God]—before . . . the dust [human body] returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit *returns* to God who gave it. (*Emphasis added.*)

*NOTE: This says that the spirit **returns** to God, clearly indicating that it existed before its “embodiment.”*

Mark 6:14-16

King Herod heard about this, for Jesus's name had become well known. Some were saying, "John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." Others said, "He is Elijah."

NOTE: The people who said Jesus was Elijah obviously believed in reincarnation—yet Scripture makes no comment about or correction to that idea.

Mark 8:27-29

Jesus went out, along with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he questioned his disciples, saying to them, "Who do people say that I am?" They told him, saying, "John the Baptist; and others say Elijah; but others, one of the prophets." And he continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered and said to him, "You are the Christ."

NOTE: Again, we see evidence of a popular belief in reincarnation (and, in the case of those who believed that the soul of John the Baptist was now inhabiting Jesus' body, what's called a "walk in"). Yet even though Jesus had the perfect opportunity to correct this belief (which he would have done were it heretical/dangerous), he did not.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

NOTE: If we try to understand this verse within a context of "one life only for each soul," it makes no sense whatsoever. Because, after all, since Jesus' ascension, almost 2,000 years have gone by with multiplied billions of additional human beings having been created (and few of them, according to post-apostolic Church teaching, having made it into heaven).

If those billions of lives consist of souls created at the dawn of time being given every conceivable chance, through repeated incarnations, to come into relationship with God (or be reabsorbed back into God, the Source), then this verse makes perfect sense. If, however, you believe that with every generation, brand-new souls are created by God with one chance (life) to receive Christ (and depending on that, subsequently heading to an eternity in heaven or hell), then the Creator's "patience" would be the worst kind of cruelty.

Revelation 1:7

Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. . . .

NOTE: This passage is a reference to Jesus’s prophesied return. “Every eye will see him” because of advanced communications technology that will enable every human being, anywhere in the world, to see live footage of any key event.

But it is the phrase “even those who pierced him” that is so electrifying. “Those who pierced him” were those individuals who participated in the crucifixion, yet it says that they will see his return!

Since the only people who could witness Jesus’ return (watching on the Earth, with their eyes), are those alive on Earth at that time, there’s no other reasonable explanation outside of reincarnation for the people who “pierced” him also being incarnate when he returns.

Revelation 2:17

To him who overcomes . . . I will also give him a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it.

NOTE: While this verse doesn’t directly address the idea of reincarnation, it makes a lot more sense when the truth of reincarnation is accepted. After all, if a human soul has incarnated 50, 100 or 500 times (in both genders along with different ethnicities, languages, religions and cultures), there isn’t any one earthly name that would identify that soul. So Jesus says he’ll provide the true name of that soul; so for each one who overcomes, one of the "graduation" joys will be receiving one’s new name.

Revelation 3:12

[To] him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it.

NOTE: This is one of the most powerful biblical evidences for the journey of the soul through time in multiple incarnations. And it rests on that little word “again”—spoken by Jesus himself. Therefore, if someone subscribes to the idea that people only live and die once—and that if a person dies as an “overcomer,” then Jesus says that s(he) “never again” will have to leave heaven, Revelation 3:12 doesn’t make sense.

While I hope to elaborate more on this in the future, it's important to note once again that "Martin Luther started the Reformation; he didn’t finish it.”

The fact is that the apostolic faith (Jesus's reason for coming and his teachings) was shanghaied, corrupted and syncretized by various unscrupulous and power-hungry "Church Fathers," popes and Roman leaders (especially Constantine). Even after the 16th-century Reformation, Greco-Roman Christianity is still far more Roman Catholic in its view of our Creator, the Christian life, salvation and virtually every important aspect of our lives than we realize.

The harshness, legalism and sheer unhappiness of those who are the most "orthodox" (according to the flawed context for the religious system that we have inherited) should be a clear indication that something is awry.

While this is in no way a proof, discovering the truth of reincarnation within the Bible, science, history¹⁸ and other religious traditions does much to resolve universally agonizing questions about the appalling circumstances of many individual lives, atrocities committed upon innocent children, very limited opportunities (in certain historical time periods and geographical areas—especially during the domination of the Roman Catholic Church from about 350 A.D. until the Reformation) to come into relationship with God, Jesus' teachings about "reaping and sowing" *during life on earth*—even though there are so many examples where people seemingly experience(d) no consequences for their acts (whether good or evil) during their (observed) life.

Also, there is the issue of the doctrine of the alleged "inerrancy" of the Bible. This is something that was drilled into me for decades—and without going into detail (for it's a massive subject in itself), let's just say that there are huge problems with labeling the various biblical books (the ones that made it in, that is, for there are many that were left out for spurious or control reasons) as "Scripture," much less inerrant Scripture.

So, for now, I will defer to "The Formation of the New Testament Canon" by Richard Carrier (2000), which I found at infidels.org/library/modern/richard_carrier/NTcanon.html#1 on Nov. 2, 2008:

Carrier's research document makes abundantly clear the political schisms within the early (post-apostolic) Church that warred over what was sound doctrine (and what allegedly wasn't), the lack of objectivity used to choose which books made it into the Bible (and which ones didn't), and documents how the emerging Roman Catholic Church largely determined what would be in the Bible we have today.)

¹⁸ There are now increasing numbers of highly reputable and scientific studies documenting past lives that have been done by some of the top psychologists and psychiatrists in the world, especially with young children who remember previous lives (and those lives are then researched and documented). Some of the most impeccable and fascinating work has been done by the late psychiatrist Dr. Ian Stevenson, department head at the University of Virginia for four decades and psychiatrist Dr. Brian Weiss (Yale U. Medical School grad and author of numerous bestselling books). On YouTube.com, there also is a remarkable four-part video series documenting the amazing story of little James Leininger of Louisiana—through detailed interviews with his parents; his father was a skeptic from the start but was convinced after extensive research; James' mother at one point makes a comment that indicates they are probably Christians.

And that's not all. While most Christians believe that the Bible was delivered straight from the mouth of the Creator through individual scribes and prophets — and that Genesis is a unique story, it turns out that the major events described in Genesis were written down—in greater detail—by the Sumerians, thousands of years before the Torah (Pentateuch) was compiled.

SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT FOR REINCARNATION

In early February 2009, a fellow member of a private Yahoo group I belong to posted a question about when physical similarities can be relied on to point to reincarnation, and when they can't. This led to my posting a response, followed by a very helpful and articulate response by “soul genome” researcher Paul Von Ward—a former naval officer, U.S. diplomat, and Harvard-trained psychologist.

Posted by: "arizcarol"
Tue Feb 10, 2009 12:44 pm (PST)

This can be confusing, because what one person interprets as “physical similarities” is not necessarily what the reincarnation researchers are talking about. Basically, when people talk about physical “matches,” they’re saying that Facial Matching has been done (which is very precise, as long as clear photographs or accurate paintings are available).

The best book I've read on the subject so far *The Soul Genome* by Paul Von Ward, although you'll also get a good introduction to facial matching by reading Walter Semkiw's [M.D.] book *Return of the Revolutionaries*.

To quote Paul Von Ward (p. 125), “The most genetically stable features [over time] are facial geometry, ear forms, hand and finger proportions, voice, odor, body types and special birthmarks or scars.”

So based on that, we would expect the facial geometry of, say, “K” and Tom Hanks (who are [alleged to be] soul splits) to be the same within a very small (1-2%) variation. That doesn't mean that the soft tissue structures (nose and mouth shapes) and eye/hair/skin color would have to be the same, however—just the underlying bony structures and geometric relationships between those.

Hopefully, I've represented this correctly. However, if either Walter [Semkiw, M.D.] or Paul happen to be reading the postings today and want to correct or add something, please weigh in.

Carol

* * *

Dear Carol,

Thanks for your posting on physical similarities. The truth is that we don't really know how the soul genome (psychoplasm) works. If the strongest of the reincarnation cases that have been collected by many researchers are valid past-life legacies, it appears that individuals inherit a package (physical, mental patterns--including memories usually suppressed in early childhood—emotional profiles, interpersonal styles, and creative interests) that predisposes us in particular directions. Along the way changes are wrought by circumstances and personal choices or learning, but we legacy leaves its marks that can be verified.

The pioneer of scientific reincarnation research, [psychiatrist] Ian Stevenson, with over 2500 well documented cases noted both specific physical features (including birthmarks and deformities) and general similarities as well as corresponding personalities. Since he focused on documenting childhood memories that could be verified, he did not pay a lot of attention to similarities in other areas until late in life (he died in 2007) when he recommended other researchers focus on them. Taking Ian's suggestion, Walter Semkiw documented many cases by (partially and subjectively) using general facial similarities. Other individuals also focused on documenting "look-a-likes" as possible cases of reincarnation. I felt that to gain credibility among people who are not already in the "choir," we had move beyond subjective assertions.

As you mentioned, in my book *The Soul Genome: Science and Reincarnation* (www.reincarnationexperiment.org), I tried to move to the level of empirical science by using reliable measures that could be replicated by others (required by science). To buttress the argument, I went to the discipline of biometrics to find out what they had discovered in terms of genetic stability in physical features and to the photo-identification process to develop a method for comparing alleged past lives with their present reincarnate.

This is the methodology you read about in *The Soul Genome*. Since the book was published, I have continued to collect the data on new cases (in the US and abroad) and have conducted appropriate statistical analyses to see whether these strong cases are so closely alike that they cannot be dismissed as a coincidence or just seeing what we want to see.

In the near future, I'll be publishing these statistics. They indicate that the similarities are consistently so much closer than we would find by matching two people from a random sample that they fall somewhere between one chance out of a hundred and one chance out of several thousand of being considered random. For those familiar with statistical levels of confidence, they range from P factors of .0014 and .0003. Those numbers are considered "very statistically significant."

These levels of confidence are even higher when one adds other physical and personality correspondences to the facial geometry. With data this persuasive, science will be forced

to prove that there is some better explanation than reincarnation. I think their efforts may help us determine the real-world impact of reincarnation, but will not disprove it.

I made a presentation of these findings last week to the University of Virginia staff that Stevenson left behind (including child psychiatrist Jim Tucker who carries on his work). They were very intrigued and we are talking about using some of Stevenson's cases to test out the methodology through even more rigorous procedures. Working with UVA and the IONS staff, I believe we can develop a consensus about what is involved and how to measure it. It will take a lot of work, but it has important day-to-day implications for how we think about ourselves as reincarnated beings.

Here is a quote from an article on IONS iShift: *“Contemplate that what you study in school or college, where you live and work, whom you marry, or not, how you spend your free time, who your friends are, and what you feel about it may reflect the influence of events in centuries past. What difference would it make if you learned that how you interpret global, national, neighborhood, and family affairs may be based on more than what you have learned since birth?”*

For those who haven't read *The Soul Genome*, you can go to this link and download a free PDF file of Part I: <http://www.reincarnationexperiment.org/publiceventsinterviews.html>

Hope this helps a bit. Sorry it's a little long, but you can't do justice to the issue in a few sentences.¹⁹

Paul Von Ward

Websites: www.vonward.com and
www.reincarnationexperiment.org

HELPFUL WEBSITES ON REINCARNATION

Helpful Web sites (while not a wholesale endorsement, each of these has something worthwhile to contribute to the subject):

christian-reincarnation.com

reincarnationexperiment.org

henrybolduc.com/mysticanddoctor.html

youtube.com: Search using the phrase “James III – The Unexplained”—and you'll get a four-part video series documenting the amazing past-life story of the young American boy, James Leininger, as told by his very bright, articulate, Southern Baptist (?) parents in filmed interviews)

¹⁹ Used by permission (email received from Paul Von Ward on Feb. 12, 2009).

QUOTATIONS

“The idea that reincarnation is contrary to the concept of salvation through grace is based upon an inadequate understanding both of the nature of reincarnation and of the biblical account. It completely misses the idea of Christ’s judgment as a ‘saving judgment’ and his status as spiritual ‘counselor’ or ‘advocate.’ It also fails to understand that *karma and reincarnation are the instruments of God’s grace*. It in fact *limits* God’s grace by necessitating the injustice of an inscrutable judgment with dire eternal consequences after a single earthly life lived under conditions of gross inequity among human beings. . . .

“It engenders spiritual indolence by encouraging those who say they don’t want to have to again go through the pain of living another earthly life. It enables immorality by suggesting that one can avoid one’s just debts to others by simply ‘accepting Christ’ without realizing that no one who truly accepts Christ can give any quarter to the desire of escaping full payment (restitution to those wronged).” ~ pp. 263-364, *The Soul’s Long Journey: How the Bible Reveals Reincarnation* by Edward Reaugh Smith

“Every situation in which a man finds himself can finally be traced back to his *karma*. An apt illustration of this crops up in a most unexpected context when the church father Origen [ca. 185 – ca. 254 A.D.] speaks of the ‘*karma*’ of Jacob and Esau.

Is there injustice with God? By no means! (Rom. 9:14.) A close look at the Scriptural account of Jacob and Esau will show that there is no injustice with God. Although it is said that before they were born or had done anything in this life, the elder should serve the younger, still one finds no injustice with God. Nor does one find injustice because Jacob supplanted his brother in the womb. We should only realize that Jacob is so worthily loved by God on the merits of previous lives and hence deserved precedence over his brother. (*On First Principles 2.9.7*)”

(From pp. 33-34 of *Reincarnation for the Christian* by Quincy Howe Jr.)

NOTE: Origen’s teachings and, specifically, the teaching of reincarnation, were outlawed by the illegal Church Council called by Empress Theodora in 553 A.D.

“It is absolutely necessary that the soul shall be healed and purified, and if it doesn’t take place in one life on earth, it must be accomplished in future earthly lives.” (Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, c. 335 – c. 394 A.D.)

The great WWII general, George Patton, believed in reincarnation. He remembered fighting the Romans as a Carthaginian. Patton also believed he was with Napoleon. *[It*

should be noted that he was a devout, although somewhat unorthodox, Christian.] A poem he wrote also clearly reveals his belief:

“Through the travail of the ages,
Midst the pomp and toil of war,
Have I fought and strove and perished,
Countless times upon this star.

So as through a glass, and darkly
The age long strife I see
Where I fought in many guises,
Many names, but always me.”

(excerpted from the website “Patton: The Second Coming of Hannibal”
(<http://www.reversespins.com/patton.html>)

When I see nothing annihilated and not a drop of water wasted, I cannot suspect the annihilation of souls, or believe that [God] will suffer the daily waste of millions of minds ready made that now exist, and put himself to the continual trouble of making new ones. Thus, finding myself to exist in the world, I believe I shall, in some shape or other, always exist; and, with all the inconveniences human life is liable to, I shall not object to a new edition of mine, hoping, however that the errata of the last may be corrected.” (Benjamin Franklin)

“Reincarnation takes care of the problem of moral injustice. To the age-old question of Job (Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?) the reincarnationist has a ready answer: we are seeing, in this life, only a fragment of a long story. If you come in at the chapter in which the villain beats the hero to a pulp, of course you will ask the old question. You may even put down the book at that point and join forces with those who call life absurd, seeing no justice in the universe. That is because you are too impatient to go on to hear the rest of the story, which will unfold a much richer pattern in which the punishment of the wicked and the vindication of the righteous will be brought to light. Death is but the end of a chapter; it is not, as the nihilists suppose, the end of the story.” (Geddes MacGregor, *Reincarnation in Christianity* [Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 1978, pp. 67-68)

“We may die old, but we shall be born young. And death requires a deeper and more gracious significance when we regard it as part of the continually recurring rhythm of progress—as inevitable, as natural, and as benevolent as sleep.” (John McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927, II: 397])

“It is the secret of the world that all things subsist and do not die, but only retire a little from sight and afterwards return again. Nothing is dead; people feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries, and there they stand looking out of the window, sound and well, in some strange new disguise. Jesus is not dead; he is very well alive; nor John, nor Paul . . . nor Aristotle. . . .” (Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Brooks Atkinson [New York: Modern Library, 1950, p. 342])

“And [Nathaniel] Hawthorne, too, I remember as one with whom I sauntered in old heroic times along the banks of the Scamander amid the ruins of chariots and heroes.” (letter from Henry David Thoreau to Emerson dated July 8, 1843, from *The Writings of Henry David Thoreau* [Cambridge, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1894, XI: 215, 253])

“I lived in Judea eighteen hundred years ago, but I never knew that there was such a one as Christ among my contemporaries.” (Thoreau—letter to Harrison Blake—April 3, 1850 [*Ibid.*, p. 110])

“As the stars looked to me when I was a shepherd in Assyria, they look to me now as a New Englander.” (Thoreau—letter to Blake—February 22, 1853 [*Ibid.*])

Julius Caesar wrote of the Celtic peoples: *“They wish to inculcate this as one of their leading tenets, that souls do not become extinct, but pass after death from one body to another, and they think that men by this tenet are in a great degree stimulated to valor, the fear of death being disregarded.”* (*Gallic War*, trans. William A. MacDevitt [London: 1853, Book VI, quoted in *Reincarnation: A New Horizon in Science, Religion, and Society*, by Sylvia Cranston and Carey Williams (Pasadena: Theosophical University Press, 1984, p. 163)])

“As to the Welsh and the Bretons of France [for whom there’s intriguing evidence that they’re descendants of scattered Northern Israelite tribes] . . . they believed ‘the spirit rested after death until the moment came for another return to earth. This continued until, after many lives, some attained the state of spiritual perfection that admitted them to Gwened, the “white” heaven where they became fully conscious of God. They chose, however, to return as teachers to mankind from time to time until that ultimate and future moment should come when all humanity would attain their state.’” (*Ibid.*, p. 164)

“Dr. E.G. Parrinder, author of African Traditional Religion, West African Psychology, and similar volumes, wrote in the 1950s that, ‘in tropical Africa, belief in rebirth is deeply enrooted. . . . Various phrases are used to describe reincarnation. One West African people calls it “the shooting forth of a branch,” and another “a recurring cycle.”’ (*Ibid.*)

In *Reincarnation*, Cranston and Williams go on to document similar belief systems among native Australians, Okinawans, native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Eskimos, Chinese, and ancient Nordic peoples. Moreover, they add:

“As to Judaism, from time to time in Jewish history, there has been an insistent belief that their prophets are reborn. The Samaritans held that Adam returned as Seth, then as Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Among the Hebrew population at the time of Jesus, there were many speculations as to whether he was Elijah, Jeremiah, or one of the other prophets (Matthew 16:13-14). Some centuries later, the Jewish Cabalists . . . taught that, when an individual no longer needs to be reborn for his own progress, he ‘can out of compassion for the world repeatedly return to help it.’” (Ibid., p. 178)

“In 1978, when Isaac Bashevis Singer ... was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, he was publicly interviewed in New York regarding his religious convictions. . . . Among the questions was ‘Mr. Singer, if I’m correct, you believe in Gilgul, in reincarnation. Hence: Has Isaac Bashevis Singer ever been here before on earth? And if so, when were you here, who were you and what were you? Do you know?’

“Singer answered by using the analogy of the seasons of the year and how they repeat again and again. After the death of winter, there is always spring again. ‘I think this is also true of the human body and the human spirit,’ he said. ‘The Almighty did not create us just for one season and then send us to die. We are coming back.’ . . .

“This view is also held by that large body of strictly orthodox Jews known as the Hasidim. Among them, reincarnation is universally taught.” (Ibid., pp. 180-181)

HOW TO FIND A GOOD REGRESSION THERAPIST

(excerpted from *Past Life Regression* by Ursula Markham, p. 37)

- Never be afraid to ask a hypnotherapist about his or her training, qualifications and insurance
- Any hypnotherapist should be willing to spend ten to fifteen minutes talking to you—without charge—to answer your questions in order to put your mind at rest before you decide to go ahead with the treatment.
- Beware of therapists who try to convince you that they have ‘special powers’ or who are unwilling to explain each stage of the process to you.
- Avoid someone who tries to charge you for a complete course of treatment at the outset. It is impossible to know how many sessions particular patients are going to need until you have worked with them.
- Listen to other people. There is no better recommendation than the word of someone whose opinion you respect.
- Trust your intuition. If you do not feel at ease with a particular therapist, he or she is not the one for you.

NOTE from Carol: If seeking a qualified regression therapist, look for one accredited by the International Association for Regression Research & Therapies (IARRT, iarrt.org).