

A Biblical Study REINCARNATION Of The Soul

A very simple definition of reincarnation (sometimes referred to as the transmigration of the soul) is given in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 14, p. 870.

“Hinduism accepts on faith the joint doctrine of rebirth and works. Every living being at the time of death is reborn in a different form, either higher or lower, whether as a human being, an animal, a heavenly being or a hell-dweller, and from that state he will again be reborn, and so on endlessly.”

The doctrine of reincarnation answers many questions for the Hindu.

“It explains the variety of personalities we find in the world, the striking gap between the rich and the poor, between the good and bad, between the wise and the not so wise. It explains all those seeming inequalities. It provides a solution to the perplexing puzzle of why one person dies young; another old. It explains the phenomenon of a genius.”

(*Major Religions Of The World*, Marcus Bach, The Grand Press, Nashville, TN, p. 25).

Although the doctrine of reincarnation may be comfortable (concerning death) and convenient (furnishing explanations for differences in

life) the most important question is, “**Is the doctrine true?**” In answering questions which have to do with spiritual matters man must consult the Bible which is the revealed word of Jehovah God (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:3). It is the Bible which reveals the truth concerning the origin (Genesis 1:27), the mission (Colossians 2:10) and the eternal destiny of man (Matthew 25:46).

THE BIBLE AND REINCARNATION

The apostle Paul writing to the Christians in the city of Corinth said, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that everyone may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10). Notice that Paul makes reference to body (singular), not bodies (plural) which the doctrine of reincarnation requires.

The inspired writer of the book of Hebrews wrote, “And it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). Man dies ONCE and then faces judgment, he does not die many times and return in many other bodies as reincarnation teaches.

The preacher in Ecclesiastes 12:7 stated, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” The spirit returns to God, it does not enter another body for another life.

The apostle Paul comforted the Christians in Thessalonica concerning their brethren who had died, “For if we believe that Jesus rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him” (I Thessalonians 4:14). If the teaching of reincarnation is true, God could not bring these with him because they would be living in other bodies.

The rich man died and was buried (Luke 16:22). The soul of the rich man did not “migrate” to another body, rather he was in torment because of the wickedness he had committed while on earth.

Elijah Reincarnated?

Some maintain that the Bible teaches that Elijah was reincarnated as John the Baptist. The prophet Malachi prophesied in Old

Testament times, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:4-5).

Concerning John the Baptist Jesus stated,

“And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes that Elijah truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elijah is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:10-13).

When the angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah the coming birth of his son John the Baptist he told him,

“And he shall go before him in the spirit of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord” (Luke 1:17).

While on earth John the Baptist was asked, “Art thou Elijah?” His reply was, “I am not” (John 1:21). He was not Elijah, he was John the Baptist. Furthermore, Elijah could not have been reincarnated in John the Baptist because he never died. The Bible tells us that Elijah was miraculously taken to heaven in a whirlwind (II Kings 1:21).

FALSE TEACHINGS IMPLIED BY THE DOCTRINE OF REINCARNATION

Provides An Excuse For Sin. According to the doctrine of reincarnation, when a soul migrates to another body for another life, the new life is influenced by the soul’s deeds in its former life. Whatever happens is the result of former deeds. If one violates the word of Jehovah God it is “karma,” or happens because of something in the soul’s former life. The Bible teaches that when man violates God’s will for man it is a sin (I John 3:4).