

REINCARNATION

Although reincarnation is thought to be pagan philosophy in the main, when one looks at it with an open mind it can be seen to be obviously part of Christian theology and makes perfect sense. There are a number of references to reincarnation in the scriptures.

John Chapter 9 “And his disciples asked him saying, Master who did sin, this man, or his parents that he was born blind.” Now it is perfectly obvious that it is not possible for a man to sin before being born except he had a previous life. The question here is who knows more about the teachings of Jesus, modern scholars, or the people who sat at his feet learning from him daily. It has been said that the disciples were unlearned and ignorant, but how can any scholar seriously believe that the disciples of Jesus were unenlightened. How could people be personally called to participate in an intimate relationship of spirit with the living Master Jesus, and not know whether reincarnation was accepted or not. This following verse clearly assumes an understanding of reincarnation.

Mathew 11:14 “And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Jesus clearly asserts here that John the Baptist is Elias reincarnated.

Mathew 16 “Whom do people say that I, The Son of Man am”. The reply is “Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets”. Could this allude to anything but reincarnation? An interesting point here is that reincarnation was a common belief among the Essenes as well as the Jews and most other groups and sects.

Luke 41 “And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the baby leapt in her womb, for lo as the voice of salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe in my womb leapt for joy”. This verse teaches us two important things. One is the soul does in fact enter the body prior to birth. Second it is not possible for an unborn infant to react to the sound of a voice with joy unless there is a recognition of something that brings joy, an emotion associated with prior experience. John the Baptist recognised Jesus through his previous association with him in previous lives.

Reincarnation was accepted among the earliest Church Fathers. Origen is one who actually left evidence in his writings. At one time he was recognised as the greatest theologian and Saint in Christendom. Later the Orthodox and Roman churches realized they needed to revise Origen’s (and also Thomas) status to that of heretic because their doctrines didn’t fit in with the churches new crowd control measures and especially the dumping of women Clergy.

Think on this --- Do you believe in a cruel and unjust God, or one that is just and compassionate. What kind of God would create one person crippled, poor, blind, diseased etc, or allow a two-year-old child to be killed in an accident if that is the only life they will ever get? Would that be just? What about people who live in cultures where they have never been exposed to Christianity. Does God burn them up in hell forever? Only through an understanding of reincarnation can God be just and compassionate. We all have different levels of opportunities to live according to our previous choices and actions.

Thankfully supreme Justice in the control of God rules the Universe through the law of Karma and Reincarnation. If this were not so, the world would be utterly chaotic, unjust and a complete shambles.

Let us study the technicalities of some of the words of the New Testament more closely.

Reincarnation in the New Testament.

It is my contention in this brief study that the doctrine of reincarnation is explicitly taught in the New Testament and that there are no explicit texts denying it. It is not my intention here to deal with critical questions such as various doctrines (often contradictorily) held by different New Testament authors on question of canonicity. I will simply deal with the question in the New Testament as commonly understood.

It should be remembered before beginning the study that doctrine of re-incarnation is held by many orthodox Jews (who call it by a word related to Gilgal – the wheel) on the basis of Old Testament evidence. Since this is a part of the belief of some orthodox Jews, it would go back to the first century of the Christian era and would be the view held by many Jews in Jesus time.

Secondly we know that belief in re-incarnation was held by a number of early Christian Authors such as Origen and his teacher Clement of Alexandria. These persons stood in a line of Apostolic succession going back to John the disciple, and Clement was separated from John only by 2 links in the chain of succession, so his teachings should be taken very seriously as representing the Apostolic doctrines.

That said I now move to the New Testament evidence. As we look at this evidence we encounter a number of mistranslations and misrepresentations by contemporary Christians who are determined NOT to see the evidence, and they try to explain it away.

My first example that I shall note in this study is the explicit word for re-incarnation. The word occurs only twice in the New Testament in Mathew.19 verse 28 and in Titus 3 verse 5. The word is Palingenesia, and it literally means “repeating of Births.” This is the clear etymology of the Greek word. The passage in Mathews gospel should then read –“ Jesus said to them, Amen I say to you that those who have followed me through the repeating of Births when the son of man shall sit down upon the throne of Glory, you also will sit upon 12 thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. This is an important passage for two reasons, firstly the phrase “Amen I say to you” means that Jesus gives the text particular authority, thus this is particularly important doctrine. Secondly it contains the clear implication that the Apostles have followed Jesus through repeated lives thus confirming the teaching that souls tend to reincarnate in Clusters of acquaintance from past lives.

The second use of the word for re-incarnation occurs in Titus 3 verse 5. However when the kindness and the love for man (on the part of God’s carpenter Saviour of us) was manifesting owing to no works in righteousness that we have performed. He saved us through the bath of repeated birth, and through making us new by the Holy Spirit.

This passage teaches us that through his love, Jesus uses re-incarnation to regenerate, (the bath of repeated births is the womb full of amniotic fluid.) It is important to note that this is not something we earned by actions of good Karma but an effect purely out of his love. It is from passages such as this that we deduce the ability of this “Master” to take on the karma of his disciples for their spiritual benefit.

The next point of evidence in the New Testament for reincarnation rests on a technical point of Greek etymology. In ancient Greek there are two words for life Bios and Zoe. They have two

different meanings. Bios refers to an individual life, thus we speak of the Bios of a man, or rabbit or horse, Where as Zoe refers to collective life. Thus in Greek we can speak of the Zoe of men rabbits or horses for example. In this instance it refers to more than one body. Now in the New Testament, all of the many hundreds of promises on references to eternal life, the word Zoe is always used, never Bios. Thus references to life after death or eternal life always imply a multitude of Bodies. The term eternal is also a mistranslation. In Greek it is Swms Alwviou life (meant bodies) lasting an age. The meaning of Aion is NOT eternal, it means a long cycle, or a god (many bodies like the god) or even the base of the spine (many bodies from the Kundalini).

I shall look briefly at some more references to Zoe to show the extent of mistranslation of passages containing this word. Take for example the famous passage, John 3:16. This should be translated “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever believes in him would not be destroyed, but have many living bodies till the end of the age” (Aionion), here meaning the Manvantara as indicated by the word Cosmos earlier in the text.

Compare John 6:47. In the Bible to what it should read, which is “Amen Amen I say to you, he who believes in me has many living bodies till the end of the Age.”

Another famous badly mistranslated text is John 14:6. The Bible says “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” This is a very bad translation. Firstly the word way is odos. While the word does mean path or track, its more important meaning is philosophical or mystery Method (esoterics) as in odos of the stoics or odos of the ecusinian mystery. The best English translation is Method. The second term translated truth is a combination of two Greek words meaning not or run, and lethia forgetting. The best translation is unforgetting. The word life is gwma which I have already discussed. A proper translation would be, “I am the method, the unforgetting, and the many living bodies. No one comes toward the Father except through me.” This passage teaches that Jesus is the method of remembering last lives and that no one can approach the Father except by using this method.

A number of important esoteric points arise from this passage. Firstly, remembrance of past lives is connected with the male energy. This is consistent with our teaching that the male energy is associated with the male force, where as genetic memory is associated with the female force. Secondly Jesus is the method of remembering past lives in so far as he is identified with the Solar Logos (eg the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings).

Malachi 4:2 The winged sun is an esoteric description of the past life memory (unforgetting key).

The next set of references to re-incarnation refers to one specific individual Namely John the Baptist. It is clear and unambiguous teaching of the New Testament if translated correctly, that John the Baptist was a reincarnation of Elijah. The relevant passages is usually wrongly translated to imply a purely symbolic connection between John the Baptist and Elijah, for instance it has been translated “he will come first in the spirit and power of Elijah. The ancient Greek words for spirit and power are pneumatikē kai dunamei the word and kai is unconsciousness.

The word pneumatikē also means mind. The word dunamei can also mean strength. Thus the passage should read “He will come first in the mind and strength of Elijah” a clear reference to

re-incarnation. Note the text says **in** the mind and strength, **not with** the mind and strength. Thus it cannot be symbolic.

In Mathew 11:14 the text is unambiguous “And if you are willing to receive this He (John) is Elijah who is to come. The text is unambiguous because of the Greek word *esti*. This means it cannot mean symbolises. Two further points of importance arise here. Firstly the speaker is Jesus so the teaching is particularly authoritative. Secondly the wording “if you are prepared to receive it” shows that Jesus is aware that some of his audience might not receive the teaching or have trouble believing it. This is also important because it shows that Jesus is here teaching an esoteric doctrine.

Mathew 16:17 shows that some people other than his disciples believed in re-incarnation as they thought he was Jeremiah or one of the other great prophets. Note however that they were wrong and that Jesus nowhere teaches any one but the disciples about re-incarnation.

Mark 9:11-13. And they asked him, “Why did the scribes say that Elijah must first come” and he said to them. “Elijah indeed is coming first to restore all things and as it is written of the son of man that he must suffer and be despised. But I say to you that Elijah has come as it is written of him and they have done to him what ever they pleased. The Greek word is unambiguously in the past tense. “Has come once again,” there is nothing in this passage to support the contention that this text should be in a symbolic sense.

Parallel to this passage is that of Mathew 17:10-13 then why do the scribes say that Elijah must first come. He answered, indeed he comes to restore all things, and I say to you Elijah just now came and they did not know him and did to him whatever they pleased, so also will the son of man suffer at their hands. Then the disciples understood that he spoke of John the Baptist. Note here the emphatic *indeed* comes. This emphasises the fact of the coming. The phrase translated “just now came” can also read already has come. In either case there is no evidence of a symbolic sense in the words.

There is however one verse in the New Testament that would tend at first sight to contradict the interpretation of John the Baptist being Elijah re-incarnated. The verse is John 1:21. And they (the priests and levites) asked him what then. Are you Elijah? And he said I am not (*ouk*). The Greek is unambiguous (*ouk*) not *emi* (I am). What are we to make of this seeming contradiction? In fact there is a simple explanation. It is important to note that the person saying that John is Elijah is Jesus, where as the person claiming not to be Elijah is John in this incarnation. The pure and simple explanation of this discrepancy then at that time when John was first asked this question at the beginning of his ministry, he simply did not remember that particular past life. Most people are not aware of all their past lives. This does not contradict the teaching of Jesus then. It must also be considered that another point is made here. In re-incarnation while it is the same consciousness over many lifetimes, it is not the same personality. Thus the passage may be taken to assent that John is not the same personality as Elijah, which does not prevent him from being the same individual consciousness.

In regard to John the Baptist, we have another suggestive passage in Lukes Gospel 1:41-44 where John is said to leap within the womb in exultation. The word for exultation implies consciousness and the whole incident implies John’s recognition of Jesus before either were born.

Both are consistent with past life memories and certainly at the very least imply prenatal consciousness and intuition.

The last passage that implies re-incarnation in the New Testament is the story of Jesus healing of the man born blind. John 9:1-12 The disciples asked was he born blind because of his sins or his parent's sins. This implies a belief on the part of the Apostles that a man can be born blind for his own sins --- impossible without understanding of karma and reincarnation. It is important to note the subtle feature of Jesus reply. Jesus answered, neither this one nor his parents, but all that the works of God might be revealed in him. Note that Jesus does not deny that a person may be born blind for his own sins, but in this case there is another explanation. If we had wished to deny the possibility of re-incarnation, Jesus could have said to the disciples you are wrong, men are never born blind for their own sins or the sins of their parents. But this he does **not** say the use of the word all, but implies not in this case. It does not imply never at all. So once again Jesus confirms, even if somewhat elliptically the fact of re-incarnation. In all of Jesus discussion of the subject it is only to the disciples and words like if you are ready to receive it, that the doctrine is mentioned. The evidence shows that this teaching was an esoteric doctrine reserved for the inner circles. This passage also supports the doctrine that negative Karma can sometimes be voluntarily assumed for the goodness of others. The blindness is not due to bad karma, but so that the glory of God can be maintained for the good of others. Before ending this article I must point out in fairness one solitary verse of the New Testament that would seem to contradict a belief in re-incarnation by the New Testament writers. This is Hebrews 9:27. This verse is normally translated as "It is reserved for man once to die and after this the judgement." A far better translation would be "It is reserved for man to die once and after that the judgement. There is a subtle difference between the two. The first implies that a man only dies once, the second equally possible translation contains no such implication. The esoteric tradition teaches that everyone experiences a first death followed by a judgement of the self, then a period in which the desires are purged by fantasy, followed by a second death and rebirth into another body. The second translation is not contradictory to this teaching as it refers to the first death.

It shows from these points that there is an etymological and contextual viewpoint throughout the New Testament leaning greatly toward the fact of re-incarnation, which was taught as an esoteric doctrine by Jesus to the disciples, and passed down through John the Apostle, to Polycarp, to Clement of Alexandria, then Origen, and then on to various Learned Gnostic Christians.

The lack of apparent evidence for these doctrines in current translations of the new testament is due to pre-suppositions of orthodox Christian translations who often ignore alternative translations, and as in the cases of Mathew 19:28 and Titus 3:5 by wilful mistranslation.

A proper reading of the texts supports the esoteric teaching of the head Church of the Australian Church of Antioch, and shows that this teaching is consistent with that of the New Testament and the Master Jesus.