

Recycled or Regenerated?

Does the Bible teach reincarnation?

Genesis 3:1-5; Matthew 11:11-14; 17:10-13; John 9:1-3

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Introduction

- Alleged evidence for reincarnation
- Four “Spiritual Flaws”
 - Genesis 3:1-5-- *“Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Has God indeed said, “You shall not eat of every tree in the garden?”’ And the woman said to the serpent, ‘We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, “You shall not eat of it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.”’ Then the serpent said to the woman, ‘You shall not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.’”*
 - First spiritual flaw: *“You will be like God”* The deification of man and pantheism
 - Second spiritual flaw: *“You will not surely die”* The denial of death and judgment which follows death

Recycled or Regenerated? Does the Bible teach reincarnation?

A. Reincarnation EXPLAINED

1. What is it? It is the belief in “soul recycling”.
2. Two Foundational Principles of “Soul Recycling”
 - a. The Principle of the “Transmigration of the Soul”
 - 1) The soul of one is capable of transmigrating from one life form to another
 - 2) Can either progress or regress
 - b. The Principle of KARMA-- that is, *“Everyone gets what they deserve.”*
 - 1) Evil is punishable in the next life, and the good is rewarded.
 - 2) If a person goes through enough cycles, eventually they will reach Nirvana (heaven), the salvation of their soul whereby it is absorbed into the one eternal reality.
3. IMPLICATIONS of the belief in Reincarnation
 - a. No unfair suffering
 - b. No Immoral behavior
 - c. No Ultimate Judgment
 - d. No Fear of death

B. Reincarnation EXAMINED. *Did Jesus and his disciples believe in reincarnation?*

1. Case #1: *Is John the Baptist the reincarnation of Elijah?*
 - Matthew 11:11-14 -- *“Assuredly I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.”*
 - Matthew 17:10-13 -- *“And His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise, the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.’ Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.”*

- a. Case Examined: *Is it true that John the Baptist was the reincarnated Elijah?*
 - 1) Elijah never died. 2 Kings 2:11. For classic reincarnation to work, a person must die before their soul can be transmuted to another,
 - 2) On the Mount of Transfiguration, Elijah, not John the Baptist appeared with Jesus.
 - Matthew 17:4-- *"Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.'"*
 - b. Case Explained: Similar but not identical
 - 1) John did not view himself as the reincarnation of Elijah—John 1:21
 - 2) John would come *"in the spirit and power of Elijah"*
 - Luke 1:17-- *"He will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and to disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*
2. Case #2: *Did the blind man sin in a former existence that caused his present blindness?*
 - John 9:1-3 -- *"Now as Jesus passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, 'Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' Jesus answered, 'Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the work of God should be revealed in him.'"*
 - a. Jewish theologians gave two reasons for birth defects:
 - 1) Prenatal sins. Cp. Genesis 25:22
 - 2) Parental sins
 - b. Jesus clearly states that the congenial blindness was not the result of KARMA or SIN.

C. Reincarnation EXPOSED. Or, What the Bible teaches about life, death, and eternal life?

1. The Bible does teach the principle of "sowing and reaping", but not KARMA.
 - Galatians 6:7-8 -- *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life."*
2. The Bible teaches that what waits for us after death is not recycling but JUDGMENT.
 - Hebrews. 9:27 -- *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:8 -- *"be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."*
 - 2 Corinthians 5:10 -- *"judgement seat of Christ, that each of you may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*
 - Revelation 20:12-13 -- *"Then I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books."*
 - Revelation 20:15 -- *"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire."*
3. The Bible teaches that if we are to make it to heaven, that is not through being recycled over and over until we get it right, but it's through REGENERATION.
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 -- *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*