

# ENOCH AND ELIJAH: R.I.P.

By M. Thomas Wark

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## ***Introduction:***

Christians who believe in the immortality of the soul or spirit sometimes point to the antediluvian patriarch Enoch and the prophet Elijah as examples of men who have never died and are alive in heaven.

Enoch is sometimes further taken as a type of the "pre-tribulation rapture" of the Body of Christ at the end of this dispensation! According to this theory, just as Enoch was "snatched away" to heaven and safety before the Flood, so also will Christians at the end of the dispensation of grace be "snatched away" to heaven and safety before the Great Tribulation and the Wrath of God.

As for Elijah, who hasn't at one time or another heard in a sermon how that Elijah was carried off to heaven in a fiery chariot thereby escaping death? This popular notion has even passed into evangelical hymnology in the song "Swing Low Sweet Chariot---comin' for to carry me home"!

In some modern "last days scenarios" BOTH Enoch and Elijah are identified as the Two Witnesses of the Book of Revelation (11:3-12). Adherents to this view reason that since "it is appointed unto men once to die, and then the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27) and since (according to their theory) neither Enoch nor Elijah have yet died, they must therefore appear again on earth just before the end of the age to witness to the followers of the Antichrist and then be slain, after which God will raise them from the dead and take them "back to heaven."

Now in the case of Enoch the language used of him in Genesis and Hebrews is incredibly terse and great care must be taken to interpret it correctly and in harmony with what the rest of holy Scripture teaches on the state of the dead.

In the case of Elijah the language used in 2 Kings is plain enough, its just more often than not misread and thereby misunderstood.

To further complicate matters, the teaching that these men escaped death and are alive in heaven is an ancient one. And to those who espouse it, the very antiquity of the teaching seemingly lends it a kind of authority. But antiquity does not equal authority. What is true is true because it is true and not merely because it is old! The serpent's lie: "thou shalt not surely die"(Gen.3:4) is very, very old--but it is NOT the truth. [1]

This belief about Enoch and Elijah being taken alive into heaven does not appear anywhere in the Old Testament. It first makes its appearance in Jewish thought and literature during the intertestamental period. That is, this belief doesn't appear until AFTER the Jews return from the seventy year long Babylonian Captivity.

## ***Persian Influences On Second Temple Judaism:***

Some time after the Jews were taken into captivity the Babylonian Empire was overthrown by the Medes and Persians. The state religion of the new empire was Zoroastrianism In fact, King Cyrus--.who Isaiah named in prophecy several centuries before he was born(Isa.45:1.4) and who allowed a remnant of the Jews to return to the land...King Cyrus was himself a Zoroastrian! [2]

Zoroastrianism comes from Zoroaster ("seed of the star" or "star-seed") which is what the Greeks called the Iranian prophet Zarathustra.

Now the Zoroastrians had a number of doctrines which more or less paralleled those of the Jews. They believed in a Supremely Good and All-Wise eternal Creator-God named Ahura Mazda, and in an Evil, not quite eternal, Corrupt-god named Angra Mainyu (or Ahriman) who was somewhat analogous to the Biblical Satan. They believed in a coming deliverer called a Saoshyant ("savior") [3] who would be born of a virgin. [4] They believed in both angels and demons. And they believed in the resurrection of the dead.

However, in stark CONTRAST to the teachings of the Hebrew patriarchs and prophets, they believed that at death the spirit of the righteous would ascend to Garo Demana (the heaven of light and the abode of Ahura Mazda), whereas the spirit of the wicked would descend to Drujo Demana (the house of the lie and the abode of Angra Mainyu) where it would dwell forever in "a murky glow and woeful wailings." [5]

According to Scripture, before the Jewish remnant was allowed to return to the land of Israel, many Zoroastrians converted to Judaism (Esther 8:17). As is often the case in such conversions the new convert brings some concepts from the old religion into the new one. This is especially so when there already exist many parallels between the two religions as was the case with Zoroastrianism and Judaism.

Evidence of the infiltration of Zoroastrian ideas Post-Captivity Judaism can be found in intertestamental literature, in the Dead Sea Scrolls in Rabbinic traditions.

For example, some of the Rabbi's taught that "the names of the angels [as well as the names of the months] came with us from Babylonia"(Rosh Hashanah 1.56d). [6] In fact, Asmodeus, the evil spirit in the Book of Tobit (3:8;etc.), is actually the name of a Zoroastrian demon! [7]

Again, the community of Essenes at Qumran in their Charter teach a doctrine of "two spirits" that so closely resembles Zarathustra's teaching that few scholars fail to see the connection. [8]

The Aramaic word for "demon" which was used by the Jews in Palestine in the first century is DEVA which is a loan word from the Persian. [9]

Finally, the word "paradise"(Aramaic=pardaisa and Greek=paradeisos) is derived from the Persian word PARDIS. "Pardis was the name of a famous palace and garden built by one of the Median kings about seven centuries before Christ." [10] The Greek transliteration of this word is used throughout the Septuagint (LXX) [11] to translate the Hebrew words for "garden" (GAN/GANNA). The Aramaic pardaisa was in common use in Palestine in the first century and survives in Rabbinical writings and in the Peshitta and other Aramaic (Syriac) Christian literature.

Since there is no evidence in Scripture that the Jews, prior to the Babylonian Captivity, believed in an intermediate state between death and resurrection, [12] and since Jewish belief in an intermediate state first appears in Judaism AFTER the Jews' return to the land (along with a number of other concepts of Persian origin)---it is reasonable to believe that late Jewish traditions of an intermediate state are also of Persian (that is, Zoroastrian) origin!

Still later, when Palestine would come under Greek rule, Hellenistic ideas would further reinforce this deviation from Biblical teaching.

## ***Enoch "in translation":***

Now in the apocryphal Wisdom of Sirach Genesis 5:24 is plainly interpreted as teaching that Enoch was taken up alive into heaven by God:

**"Enoch pleased the Lord, and was taken up; he was an example of repentance to all generations."** (Sirach 44:16)

**"No one like Enoch has been created on earth, for he was taken up from the earth."** (Sirach 49:14)

The prophet Elijah gets a similar treatment in Sirach:

**"You who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury..."** (Sirach 48:9.10)

But is the teaching in this apocryphal book Scriptural? Are the theories, both ancient and modern, which are based upon this teaching the truth?

Let us take a closer look at what the Holy Scriptures have to say about these so called "Old Testament raptures." We will begin with the case of Enoch:

**"And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God TOOK him."** (Gen.5:24, KJV)

**"By faith Enoch was TRANSLATED so that he did not see death, 'and was not found because God had translated him'; for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."** (Hebrews 11:5, NKJV)

As a number of scholars and students believe that Paul's epistle to the Hebrews was originally scribed in Aramaic and then translated into Greek [13] we will give Dr. Lamsa's translation of this verse from the Peshitta:

**"By faith Enoch DEPARTED and did not taste death, and he was not found, because God TOOK him; but before He TOOK him away, there was a testimonial about him, that he pleased God."** (Heb.11:5, Lamsa)

Some say that these passages say that Enoch never died, but that God took him directly to heaven. On the other hand, there are Scriptures that certainly contradict such a notion. For example:

**"NO MAN HAS ASCENDED TO HEAVEN but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."** (John 3:13, NKJV)

**"NO MAN HAS SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME."** (1 John 4:12a, NKJV)

How are we to reconcile the popular teaching with such plain statements to the contrary? ANSWER: we cannot!

In Genesis 5:24 the word "took" is from the Hebrew LAQAH which means "to receive" or "to accept"(Young's Analytical Concordance). Phrases similar to "he was not" are used elsewhere in the Old Testament to denote

DEATH. For example:

**"Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are not" (Jer.31:15, NKJV) -- that is, they had died. Again: "...for now I shall lie in the earth; thou wilt seek me but I shall not be" (Job 7:21, KJV). Thus Genesis 5:24 could be read: "And Enoch walked with God, and he DIED; for God ACCEPTED him."**

The first part of this verse seems plain enough But what could "for God ACCEPTED him" possibly mean? A closer look at Hebrews 11:5 will provide the answer we seek.

In the Aramaic (Peshitta) text of Hebrews 11:5 the words which Dr. Lamsa renders "departed" and "took" are from the word SeNA which means "to remove," "to change," "to depart," "to translate," "to transfer" and "to carry over. In this context "to remove" is probably the best rendering. "By faith Enoch was REMOVED..." This reminds us of Job's declaration: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him"(Job 13:15, KJV).

The Greek text of Hebrews 11:5 is also illuminating. The NKJV reads in part: "By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death..." Here the Greek word rendered "taken away is METATITHEMI, which, according to Strong's Exhaustive Concordance, means "to place, or transfer in a passive, horizontal posture." Forms of this word also occur in Acts 7:16 ("carried back"), Galatians 1:6 ("turning away"), Heb.7:12 ("changed"), and Jude 4 ("turn"). It is used throughout the LXX with a similar range of meanings. However, it is also used in the fourth chapter of the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon. Chapter four, verse ten reads:

**"He pleased God, and was beloved of Him; so that living among sinners he was TRANSLATED." [14]**

An examination of the context of this verse reveals that it is not referring to Enoch in particular, but rather to the righteous in general in contrast to the wicked. Let's look at Wisdom 4:10 once more, this time in context:

**"But though the righteous he prevented with death, yet shall he [the righteous] be in rest." (v.7)**

**"He [the righteous] pleased God, and was beloved of Him; so that living among sinners he [the righteous] was TRANSLATED." (v.10)**

**"Yea, speedily he [the righteous] was TAKEN AWAY, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul." (v.11)**

**"He [the righteous], being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time." (v.13)**

**"For his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened [God] to TAKE HIM AWAY from among the wicked." (v.14)**

**"This the people saw, and understood it not, neither laid they up this in their minds, that [God's] grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He has respect unto His chosen." (v.15)**

**"Thus the righteous THAT IS DEAD shall condemn the ungodly WHICH ARE LIVING..." (v.16)**

**"For they shall see the END of the wise, and shall not understand what God in His counsel hath decreed of him [the righteous], and to what end the Lord hath set him in safety." (v.17)**

All of the above verses are from The Wisdom of Solomon, chapter four, verses seven through seventeen. This passage teaches that when the wicked live to be very old and the righteous die young it is because God is merciful to the righteous! God takes the righteous away from among the wicked to spare them from their contaminating influence.

Thus we see that the Greek word METATITHEMI, as used in the Greek text of Hebrews 11:5 and in the Wisdom of Solomon 4:7-17, simply means to be taken out of life before one's years are fulfilled or before one's time. This is in order to spare the righteous from the further corrupting influence of the wicked, thereby insuring that the righteous do not lose their reward!

Before we take leave of this fascinating passage we would like to point out that the parallels between the situation of "the righteous" in these verses and that of Enoch as related in Genesis 5:24 and Hebrews 11:5 are many. In fact, we contend that the author of the Wisdom of Solomon had Enoch in mind when he penned this passage, and that he used Enoch as an example of what happens and why-- whenever any righteous person is prematurely removed from the land of the living.

Finally, we contend that neither the Aramaic text of Hebrews 11:5 nor the Greek texts of Hebrews 11:5 and The Wisdom of Solomon 4:7-17 teach that anyone was "translated" alive up to heaven.

As for the statement that Enoch "did not death"(Heb.11:5, NKJV), this should be compared *and contrasted* with the statements of Paul in 2 Timothy 4:6-8 and of Peter in 2 Peter 1:13-15. These men had advance warning of their impending death. Enoch was removed suddenly and without warning.

For any who may think our interpretation of Enoch's REMOVAL strange we offer the commentary of one of Judaism's greatest teachers: Rabbi Solomon, son of Isaac, of Troyes---commonly known as Rashi. Here follows his interpretation of Genesis 5:24:

**"AND ENOCH WALKED. He was a righteous man, yet [it was] lightminded (for him) to return to evil. Therefore the Holy One, Blessed be He, hastened and removed him and let him die before his time. That is why Scripture varies [the expression] about his death and writes, 'And he was not' in the world to complete his years. FOR HE TOOK HIM. Before his time..." (The Pentateuch And Rashi's Commentary, Vol.1: Genesis).**

While the comments of The Wisdom of Solomon and Rashi are very illuminating--in that they establish that the language used of Enoch in Genesis and in Hebrews CAN legitimately refer to a premature death-- NEVERTHELESS, the testimony of God's Word must be our final court of appeal in this matter. Let us, then, return to Hebrews eleven and see if that chapter can shed any more light on the fate of Enoch.

Hebrews eleven lists the famous men and women of the Old Testament era and testifies of their faith:

By faith Abel...By faith Enoch...By faith Noah...By faith Abraham..."

After listing all of these faithful ones, INCLUDING ENOCH, Paul concludes in verse 13:

"These ALL died in faith, not having received the promises..."

And again:

**"And these ALL [again: INCLUDING ENOCH], having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise; God having provided some better thing for us, that they [INCLUDING ENOCH] without us should not be made perfect." (Hebrews 11:39-40, NKJV)**

Friends, if God's Word is to be believed, and it is, Enoch was NOT "raptured" to heaven. We must conclude, rather, that Enoch DID die; that he died in faith not having received the promises, and that he shall receive the promises in the resurrection of the dead like all believers. [15]

### ***Elijah and the Whirlwind:***

What about Elijah? Doesn't Scripture teach that he was taken away to heaven in a fiery chariot?

**"And it came to pass, as they [Elijah & Elisha] still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." (2 Kings 2:11, KJV)**

Does this verse actually teach that the prophet was taken up alive into heaven, whether by a chariot of fire or by a whirlwind? As we saw above, the author of the apocryphal Wisdom of Sirach seemed to think so! Let's take another look at what Sirach says and then compare it to the inspired Word of God.

**"You [Elijah] who were taken up by a whirlwind of fire, in a chariot with horses of fire; you who are ready at the appointed time, it is written, to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury (Sirach 48:9.10)**

And now God's Word:

**"...and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into HEAVEN." (2 Kings 2:11b, KJV)**

The word translated "heaven" in this verse is from the Hebrew SHAMAYIM which The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon says means "heaven, sky"(p.1029, col.2). It is the same word used in Genesis 1:7-8 where God is said to have placed water above and below the firmament and then "God called the firmament HEAVEN;"--that is, THE SKY!

Sirach's belief that Elijah was alive in heaven and "ready at the appointed time...to calm the wrath of God before it breaks out in fury" was based on his interpretation of Malachi 4:5.6, which reads:

**"Behold, I will send 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..." (KJV)**

But Sirach's overly literal understanding of this prophecy is not correct. Our Lord Jesus Christ gives us the correct interpretation. According to Jesus, Malachi prophesied the ministry of John the Baptist:

**"He [John the Baptist] will also go before Him in the spirit and power 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, NKJV)**

No, Elijah did NOT ride up to heaven on a fiery chariot as many believe. The Scripture plainly states that "a chariot of fire parted them [Elijah & Elisha] asunder." And after Elisha was some distance away "Elijah went up BY A WHIRLWIND." (He would have died in a chariot of fire!) Further, the meaning of the Hebrew is that the prophet "went up by a whirlwind into THE SKY" or "atmosphere." He certainly did not ascend to the heaven of the angels or of God's throne! How can we be sure?

First, we have already quoted the statement of the beloved Apostle that; "No man has ascended into heaven." (John 3:13).

Second, the Scriptures record that ELIJAH WAS STILL ON EARTH SOME TWENTY YEARS LATER during the reign of King Jehoram!

**"And there came a letter to him [King Jehoram] from Elijah the prophet, saying: 'Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father! Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, Nor in the ways of Asa, King of Judah...'" (2Chron.21:12, KJV)**

This letter conclusively demonstrates two things:

1) It demonstrates that Elijah was still on earth some twenty years after being transported by a whirlwind through the atmosphere to a different location

2) It further shows that Elijah was acquainted with contemporary events and therefore must have been living somewhere in Israel or Judah.

Ephrem, an early Syriac Christian theologian, comments: "There came suddenly from on high a fire-storm, and in the midst of the flame the form of a chariot and of horses, and separated them from one another; one of the two it left on the earth, the other, namely Elijah, it carried up on high...but whither the wind...took him, or in what place it left him, the Scriptures have NOT told us. They say, however, that some years afterwards an alarming letter from him, full of threats, was delivered to King Joram of Judah." (quoted in Commentary On the OT, Keil & Delitzsch, Vol.3, p.209, note 1).

To this we add the testimony of Josephus: "Now at this time it was that Elijah disappeared from among men, and no one knows of his death to this very day;...And indeed, as to Elijah, and as to Enoch, who was before the Deluge, it is written in the sacred books that they disappeared; ***but so that nobody knew that they died***" (Antiquities IX, 9:2)

### ***Elijah at the Transfiguration:***

Some believers take Elijah's appearance with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration as proof that Elijah did in fact ascend to heaven. Let's examine the record to see whether this is so. Matthew 17:1-9 reads:

**"Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 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.' While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!' And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, 'Arise, and do not be afraid.' When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, 'Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.'" (NKJV)**

It is amazing to us that anyone would think that this passage proves that Elijah, to say nothing of Moses, is still alive. Verse 9 plainly states that what the disciples saw and heard occurred in a vision! [16]

The Shem-Tob manuscript of the Gospel of Matthew--preserved for centuries by the Jews and NOT a translation from Greek or Aramaic--is a textual descendant of the original Hebrew Matthew. [17] In chapter 17, verse three of this little known manuscript there is an interesting variant reading:

**"Then Moses and Elijah, while speaking with Him, were revealed to them and they told Jesus all which would happen to Him in Jerusalem. Peter and his companions were asleep. Asleep but not asleep; awake but not awake. They saw His body and the two men with Him."**

This textual variant teaches us three things: 1) It teaches that the sight and sound of "Moses and Elijah" speaking with Jesus was a REVELATION to Peter, James and John. 2) It teaches us that the purpose of the revelation was to prepare the disciples for what was going to happen to Jesus in Jerusalem; and that the path to His glorification was to be one of suffering. This is confirmed in verses 12 & 22. And finally, 3) It teaches that the state in which the disciples received this REVELATION was not unlike a waking dream. They are described as being "asleep but not asleep; awake but not awake."

But why Moses and Elijah? Why not Abraham and Job? Or Deborah and Barak? The reason is that Moses and Elijah represented the Law and the Prophets, and that what was going to happen to Jesus in Jerusalem was going to happen in fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. The disciples had a difficult time grasping this teaching.

In chapter 24 of Luke's Gospel we're told that after His resurrection from the dead Jesus met two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. Not recognizing Him they spoke with Him about their Master and how He had been delivered up and crucified, and how His tomb had been found empty. In verses 25-27 we read:

**"Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (NKJV)**

Now in the Law and the Prophets there are two principal lines of Messianic teaching. One line concerns "the suffering servant." The other line concerns "the Davidic king." A two-messiah theory was widely held at that time. Many Rabbi's believed in a Messiah-ben-Joseph who would come and suffer and redeem his brethren; and in a Messiah-ben-David who would come and deliver Israel from her enemies and then rule for ever on the throne of David. [18]

The Essenes at Qumran also held a form of this theory. In their Charter they are counseled:

"They shall govern themselves using the original precepts by which the men of the Community began to be instructed, doing so until there come the Prophet and the *Messiah's of Aaron and Israel.*"

(1Q, col 9, lines 10-11) [19]

We believe that the purpose of this VISION was to teach the disciples that Jesus is THE "beloved Son" in Whom God is well-pleased and the singular INDIVIDUAL in Whom BOTH lines of Messianic prophecy will be fulfilled. It does NOT teach that Elijah is alive in heaven!

In closing, let us return to Hebrews chapter eleven. While Elijah the prophet is not here mentioned by name (as was Enoch) he is most certainly included in verse 32 in the phrase: "...and of the rest of the prophets."

Therefore Elijah ALSO comes under the verdict that "these ALL died in faith..." (Heb.11:13a) and "ALL these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us." (Heb.11:39-40, NKJV)

### ***In Conclusion:***

The testimony of God's Word is clear and consistent on these matters. All die in Adam. Enoch and Elijah are no exception! Along with the patriarchs, the prophets and all who have since died in faith--they sleep the sleep of death until it is time for them to awaken in resurrection.

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### ***Notes:***

[1] Paul speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ as the one "Who alone has immortality" (1 Timothy 6:16). "Those who are Christ's" will put on immortality and incorruption in resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-23 & 50-55), when the promise of everlasting life is finally realized (2 Timothy 1:1; Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25;etc.).

[2] See: Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices by Mary Boyce, pp. 50-53 for the historical and archaeological evidence.

[3] A Savior, Zoroaster's "...own kith and kin, a superman of miraculous power. born in a supernatural manner, will finally descend upon earth to renovate the world." From: Zoroastrian Theology by M. N. Dhalla p.182.

[4] "...the Saoshyant will be born of the prophet's own seed, miraculously preserved in the depths of a lake.. ..When the end of time approaches, it is said, a virgin will bathe in this lake and will become with child by this prophet; and she will in due course bear a son, named Astvat-ereta, 'He who embodies righteousness' [after Zoroaster's own words: 'May righteousness be embodied' Yasna 43:16]. Despite his miraculous conception, the coming World Savior will thus be a man, born of human parents..." From Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices by Mary

Boyce, p.42.

[5] The full quotation reads: "Whoever comes after the Follower of Asha, his dwelling in future shall be Light, but for you, O followers of the Druj, a long period of darkness, a murky glow, and woeful wailings---to such an existence will your evil conscience lead you through your evil deeds." (Yasna 43:16) From: SONGS OF ZARATHUSTRA: The Gathas. Translated From The Avesta, by D.F.A. Bode and P. Nanavutty.

[6] Quoted from: A Rabbinic Commentary On The New Testament by Samuel Tobias Lachs, p.19-20.

[7] "But of all the demons that attend upon Ahriman, the arch-fiend Aeshma (...aesma daeva, regarded by some as the Asmodeus of the Book of Tobit) is the most feared and the most diabolical." From: Zoroastrian Studies by A.V. Williams Jackson, p.75.

[8] Compare Zarathustra's teaching given in Yasna 30:1-11 with that of the Essenes at Qumran in 3:15---4:25 of their Charter.

[9] DAEVA is a word of Indo-Aryan origin. In ancient and modern Hindu sects the Daevas (beings of light or "Shining Ones") are worshipped as gods, while the ASURAS are shunned as dark spirits. Zarathustra and his followers split off from an early form of this DAEVA-religion. Zarathustra claimed that the DAEVAS were actually the dark spirits (equivalent to demons) while the ASURAS were spirit-servants (angels) of Ahura Mazda, the one true God! See: Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs And Practices by Mary Boyce, pp.11, 19,21, 30&36.

[10] Quoted from: Iranian Influence In Judaism And Christianity by A. Aryanpur & M. Aryanpur, p.53.

[11] The LXX or Septuagint Version of the Old Testament was made circa 280 BCE when Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt translated the Scriptures from Hebrew into Greek for the use of Greek-speaking Jews and proselytes.

[12] "Scholars generally agree that the Old Testament writings, with the possible exception of Isaiah 26 and Daniel 12, do not contain explicit references to the resurrection of the dead. At death the individual simply is gathered to his final (or father's) place, the tomb. Sheol and the netherworld ['eres] is described as the abode of the dead, not of people who continue to live after death [cf. Isa .38:18; Sir. 17:28;14:12-19J." From: The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha ed. By James H. Charlesworth; Volume I, p.xxxiii.

[13] See: Semitic Light On Hebrews by J. S. Trimm, Hebrew/Aramaic Research Institute, Hurst TX, 1997 and The Semitic Origin Of The New Testament by J. S. Trimm, Hebrew/Aramaic Research Institute, Hurst TX 1996.

Also see the insightful, if somewhat dated, New Testament Origin by George Lamsa, Aramaic Bible Society Inc., Covington GA, 1976.

[14] See: The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek And English by Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton, pp.58,59 of Apocrypha.

[15] With the exception of those believers who "are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:15).  
These will not experience death.

[16] Even a casual reading of the Scriptures reveals that God has often delivered Divine instruction to people by means of  
VISIONS. Visions are similar to waking dreams. In visions, spiritual truth is imparted to the mind or heart  
AUDIBLY and  
PICTORALLY. Visions, then, are a kind of AUDIO-VISUAL PARABLE.

Now any informed student of Scripture knows better than to interpret a PARABLE as a literal or historical account. The  
results of so doing can be disastrous. The same thing applies to VISIONS recorded in Scripture. They must  
never be treated  
as anything more than SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATIONS of truth.

For instance, when Moses SAW the burning bush and HEARD the voice of God speaking to him from the  
midst of it, do you think that a Bedouin on a nearby sand dune would also have seen the flame and heard the  
voice? Of course not! This revelation was given by God to Moses in a VISION. And in it, that which God  
wanted to convey to Moses was imparted  
PICTORALLY and AUDIBLY to his heart and mind alone.

[17] The universal tradition of the early churches was that the Gospel of Matthew was originally scribed in  
Hebrew and later  
translated into Greek and Aramaic. The Shem-Tob and DuTillet manuscripts, while NOT the Hebrew original,  
are not  
translations and are therefore textual descendants of the original. See: Hebrew Gospel Of Matthew by George  
Howard,  
pp.155-233 and B'SOROT MATTI: The Good News According To Matthew From An Old Hebrew  
Manuscript by James Scott Trimm, pp. vii-xiv.

[18] See: What The Rabbis Know About The Messiah by Rachmiel Frydland, pp. 51-61.

[19] For the Priestly Messiah "of Aaron" see: 1QS<sub>a</sub>=1Q28a 11-14a & 17-20a; 4Q534-536. For the kingly  
[Davidic] Messiah "of Israel" see: 1QS<sub>a</sub>=1Q28a 14b-17a & 20b-21a; 4Q174 Col. 3:10-13; 4Q285 Frag. 5;  
4Q369; 4Q252 Col. 5:1-5.