

ANTHROPOLOGY: THE DOCTRINE OF MAN

I. ORIGIN OF MAN AND THE UNIVERSE

A. Various Views as to the Origin of Man:

1. Fiat creation:
Creation out of no existing materials (Heb 11:3)
2. Naturalistic (atheistic) evolution:
Everything can be accounted for by natural processes.
3. Theistic evolution:
God involved in the idea of creation but only at the start.
4. Progressive creation: (accepted by some neo-evangelicals)
God involved at the beginning and then He stops in along the way. In the meantime He lets things happen naturally (Bernard Ramm).
5. Recent - Eden theory:
Adam and Eve were an island of creation within a sea of evolution.

B. Evidence of Revelation for Fiat Creation

1. The Bible is the only source of revelation, for no one else but God was there.
2. Story of creation is presented as historical fact not as true myth. At least 17 times in Genesis 1 God is said to be the Creator. (Ex 20:9-11; Ps 8; 104; Matt 19:4-6; Heb 11:3).
3. New Testament evidence for creation out of nothing:
 - a. C.P. Hebrews 11:3
 - b. John 1:3 -- absolute beginning of all created things
 - c. Colossians 1:16,17 -- a creation held together by God's power

C. The Interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2

1. The Gap view or the reconstitution theory

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a. Exponents: Scofield, Bible institutes

b. Explanation:

- 1) V.1 -- topic sentence that talks about a perfect world -- the original creation.
- 2) Between V1 and V2 there is an indefinite period of time -- within this gap we place the geological age.
- 3) During this period Satan fell, this is why the earth was without form and void.
- 4) After a length of time God begins to reform the earth to make it inhabitable.

c. Defense:

- 1) It fits with Jeremiah 4:23-26 and Isaiah 45:18.
- 2) Accounts for fall of Satan.
- 3) Accounts for geological ages.

d. Objections:

- 1) "Earth became" in King James Version is "earth was" in Hebrew language.
- 2) Words "waste" and "void" do not necessarily imply a state that results from a judgment. They mean unformed and uninhabited.
- 3) Genesis 1:31 There was nothing evil at that point. Therefore Satan could not have fallen yet.

2. Re-creation theory

a. Exponents: M.F. Unger, Wayne Young, Moffet, Goodspeed

b. Explanation:

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- 1) Gen 1:1,2 : Not talking about the original creation out of nothing but is a later refashioning of a judgment filled earth in order to prepare the earth for man.
- 2) Gen 1 : Deals with God's creative activity as it concerns man.
- 3) Man is a comparative late comer in God's creative program.

c. Defense:

- 1) If Gen 1:1 is the original creation then Gen 1:2 has to be the original refashioning or a result of a judgment implying a gap.
- 2) You cannot place a gap between v1 and 2 according to the Hebrew text.
- 3) Therefore, v1 is not the original creation but a later fashioning.
- 4) The Hebrew word "to create" "Barah" is always used of Divine activity. It means to shape or to form or to fashion (Gen 1:27).
- 5) In the Hebrew "Bershith" means "in the beginning". This could be a dependent clause or a construct. If a dependent clause, it means "in the beginning". If a construct, it means "when God began to create."

d. Objections:

- 1) To translate this as a construct is not in keeping with oldest tradition and neither the form of the verb nor the context demand this to be a construct.
- 2) If this is a construct then the doctrine of original creation is not taught in Gen 1:1. Therefore the central passage on creation in the Bible does not speak of fiat creation.

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- 3) "Heaven and earth" V.1 is speaking of the entire universe.
- 4) Hebrew word for "create" does not have to mean create out of nothing. However, it is the only Hebrew word possible to teach fiat creation.

3. The original creation view:

a. Exponents: Ryrie, Barbieri

b. Explanation:

- 1) V.1 is a broad comprehensive statement of the fact of creation. A topic statement of creation.
- 2) V.2 describes the earth as it came from God at the point which it was created. Was without form and shapeless and uninhabited and it remains this way for a period of time until V.3.
- 3) V.3 the first recorded step in the process of fashioning.

c. Defense:

- 1) Maintains the unity of Gen 1:1&2
- 2) It best fits with the grammar of the Hebrew text.
- 3) Best interprets Hebrew word "Barah".
- 4) Allows for long periods of times if you have to have them.

D. The Interpretation of "days" of Gen 1 and 2

1. Various interpretations:

- a. Literal 24 hour days
- b. Day/Age theory
- c. "Days" is a literary device. This is found in Hebrew poetry.

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- d. A Babylonian myth
- e. The 6 days are not days of creation but days of revelation (Bernard Ramm).

2. Literal 24-hour day view

- a. A word should be taken literally unless the text indicates otherwise.
- b. Hebrew word for day is "yom". It is used 1,480 times in the OT in various ways. Therefore, you cannot prove conclusively the meaning of "yom". It must be determined by context.
- c. Most Hebrew lexicons don't allow "yom" to be translated as a long period of time, it is usually a 24-hour day.
- d. Whenever "yom" is associated with a definite numeral a literal 24-hour day is meant.
- e. God commands and it is done immediately.
- f. The 6 days are all referred to as "the evening and the morning" -- which is the common way in the Pentateuch of referring to a 24-hour day.
- g. Arguments from later Scriptures about the creation supports 24-hour days. (Exodus 20).
- h. This view cannot give the evolutionist enough time for his view.

E. The Problems of Evolution

1. Definition of evolution: a change, development, or process. A complete theory which included the idea of origins. The process of change as a result of natural process.
2. Data from evolution
 - a. Mutations and natural selections

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1) Explanation: a mutation is a sudden variation which causes the offspring to be quite different from his parents, then natural selection comes along and sometimes maintains this mutation. Thus you get a new form.

2) Criticisms of this view:

a) This is a circular argument. A mutation leads to natural selection leads to mutation.

b) Most mutations are harmful and tend to make the species weaker. Beneficial mutations have never been observed.

c) The scientist cannot explain where new genes come from.

d) Natural selection does not guarantee improvement.

e) Scientists have never observed beneficial mutations, the production of new genes or natural selection. Therefore, their theory rests on faith.

b. Fossils -- Criticisms:

1) Methods of dating is not as reliable as claimed.

2) Fossil evidence has never produced any intermediate forms (missing links).

3) Evidence for early man is a bit scanty for the conclusions that have been drawn. (Ex: the piltdown man was a complete fake)

c. Other factors:

1) Evolution is based on faith as much as creationism is. The evolutionist must have faith in the eternity of matter. Something has always existed either matter or God.

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- 2) The evolutionist believes that mutations + natural selection + time + change = our present existence.

II THE MATERIAL PART OF MAN

A. Its Creation and Structure

1. Gen 2:7 -- man was a special act of God created from dust, and returns to dust at death (Gen 2:19; I Cor 15:48,49; II Cor 4:7)
2. He is created in God's image (Gen 1:27). "The image of God involves man being given dominion over the earth and his capacity for moral action. Both of which have been disturbed by the entrance of sin so that he lost his dominion and corrupted his moral abilities. Nevertheless, he is unique among all God's creatures because of being created in His image." --Ryrie

B. Its Designation

1. The main terms:
 - a. Body: Greek "Soma" - does not refer to the person as such; but to the shell (II Cor 12:3) .
 - b. Flesh: Greek "Sarx" -- 3 meanings:
 - 1) Equal to soma - the material man (Gal 2:20)
 - 2) The immaterial part of man (Rom 7:18)
 - 3) The whole man (material & immaterial) (Matt 24:22)
2. Some additional terms
 - a. Body of sin (Rom 6:6) = body same as b.
 - b. Body of this death (Rom 7:24) - close to our physical body
 - c. Earthen vessels (II Cor 4:7)
 - d. Temple of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6:19)

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C. Its Descriptions

1. Unredeemed (Rom 8:23) -- until later
2. Earthen vessels (II Cor 4:7) -- emphasis on our limitations
3. Can become the residence of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6:19,20)
4. Must be kept under control (I Cor 9:27)

D. Its Future (John 5:28,29)

1. The 1st resurrection unto life (Rev 20)
2. The 2nd resurrection unto death (Rev 20:11-15) -- judged according to works, after the Millennium. All these are cast into the Lake of Fire.

III THE IMMATERIAL PART OF MAN

A. The Original Form of Man

1. Words (Gen 1:26)
 - a. Image -- a replica
 - b. Likeness -- similar
2. Meaning of the words
 - a. Do these words speak of posture or appearance? No!
 - b. What was Adam's state before the fall?
 - 1) Innocence or passive holiness
 - 2) Had some holiness because he could communicate with God
 - 3) This was untested holiness
 - 4) Therefore had an unconfirmed creature holiness

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c. Are the two words the same?

- 1) Yes, in that they both refer to different facets of our immaterial nature.
- 2) The image of God was retained although severely marred (ICor 11:7; James 3:9).

d. Facts to remember in summary --

- 1) Even fallen man still has some semblance of the original creation.
- 2) The image of God in man is so marred that only the intervention of God can overcome the damage.

B. The Perpetuation of the Immaterial Part of Man (theories):

1. Pre-existence theory:

Came from Greek philosophy

Theory held by Mormon Church

God created all the souls when He created Heaven and Earth.

2. Creationism:

When a child is conceived God creates a soul for that child (Berkolf).

Theory held by Roman Catholic Church

a. C. Hodge gives these arguments:

- 1) It is Scriptural (Numbers 16:22; Heb 12:9)
- 2) Nature of immaterial part of man, therefore, it should come from God.
- 3) How can you account for a Christ with a sinless nature otherwise.

b. Oppose: (Shedd) Our material nature also comes from God but it has NOT already been created.

3. Traducianism (to draw from):

The soul is passed on through the parents.

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a. Arguments (Shedd):

- 1) Scripture: Heb 7:10 -- Levi pays tithes to Melchizedek. But Abraham actually did it, so even before Levi was born his material and immaterial nature was in Abraham's loins.
- 2) Physiology: Gen 5:3 -- Adam passed on to his son his own immaterial nature as well as material nature.
- 3) Best explains the imputations of Adam's sin to the rest of the race.
- 4) Explains the universality of sin.
- 5) With creationism God is either directly or indirectly the author of sin.

b. SUMMARY: The Traducianism theory says that Christ is an exception in every other way in His life so why not here.

C. The Composition of Man

1. The dichotomous nature of man:

a. Man can be divided into 2 essential parts:
material and immaterial.

b. Arguments:

- 1) The universe has 2 substances - material & immaterial
- 2) Scripture--
 - a) There are only 2 substances (Job 7:3;32:8;33:4; Gen 2:7).
 - b) Soul & spirit used interchangeably with Matt 20:28 --CP Matt 27:50 / Heb12:23 -- CP Rev 6:9 / Jn12:37 -- CP Jn13:21.

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2. Characterizations of the immaterial part of man

a. Soul: used in these different ways:

- 1) Whole immaterial part of man (I Pet 2:11).
- 2) The whole man (Rom 13:1; I Thess 5:23)

b. Spirit: used in 3 various ways:

- 1) The wind (Gen 8:1; II Thess 2:8).
- 2) The whole immaterial part of man (I Cor 5:5).
- 3) Manifestation of the spiritual life (Matt 5:3; I Cor 2:11).

"The spirit is usually mentioned in the Scriptures as that part of man which is capable of contemplating God, and the soul as that part of man which is related to self and the various functions of the intellect, sensibilities and will." Chafer

c. Heart -- the seat of man's. . .

- 1) Intellectual life (Matt 15:19-20).
- 2) Emotional life (Ps 37:4; Rom 9:2).
- 3) Volitional life (Exodus 7:23, Heb 4:7).
- 4) Spiritual life (Rom 10:9-10; Eph 3:17).

d. Conscience

- 1) Unsaved man's conscience
 - a) can be a guide (Rom 2:15).
 - b) can be sincerely wrong (Acts 23:1).
- 2) Saved man's conscience can lead him in right relationships to his --

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- a) government (Rom 13:5).
- b) employer (I Pet 2:19).
- c) brethren (I Cor 8:7-12).
- d) spiritual life (Rom 9:1-3; II Cor 1:12).

e. Mind

1) Unsaved man's mind:

- a) Rom 1:28 -- reprobate (depraved).
- b) Eph 4:17 -- empty (futility) = devoid of truth.
- c) Titus 1:15 -- defiled polute, contaminate.
- d) II Cor 4:4 -- blinded.
- e) Eph 4:18 -- darkened.
- f) Rom:11 -- does not have the ability to discern spiritual things (I Cor 2:14).

2) Saved man's mind:

Use of it --

- a) to understand the Word of God (Luke 24:25; I Cor 2:15,16).
- b) in loving Him (Matt 22:37).
- c) in understanding His will (Eph 5:17).

Prerequisites for using our minds --

- a) I Pet 1:13 -- girded up (that is serious activity).
- b) II Cor 10:5 -- every thought is to be brought into Captivity.

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c) Rom 12:2 -- renewed.

f. Flesh -- Rom 7 -- fallen, unredeemed humanness.

3. Tricotomous nature of man -- Heb 4:12 -- body, soul & spirit.

IV THE FALL OF MAN -- Genesis 3 Central Passage

A. Views of This Passage:

1. Orthodox: both truth and fact in this account.
2. Neo-orthodox: truth but not fact.
3. Liberal: no truth, no fact.

B. The Place of the Perfection:

Man was in a perfect environment in a special position with a perfect wife. Therefore man's sin does not stem from his environment.

C. The Responsibility of Man:

Obedience to the will of God: was involved in dressing and keeping of the garden, not to eat of the tree.

D. Nature of Man:

Untested creature holiness "This implies no more than that they were innocent, which is a negative term and suggests that they had not committed sin. Holiness, which is the primary attribute of God, is a positive term and indicates that He is incapable of sinning." --Chafer

E. The Serpent:

Was a creature made by God, but used by Satan.

F. The Process of the Temptation: 4 Steps

1. Eve doubts the goodness of God because of Satan (3:1).

"Satan was evidently trying to get Eve to believe that God was not good if He withheld anything from them....by contrast Satan's plan allowed them to do the very thing God would not permit. This was Satan's counterfeit." Ryrie

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2. Satan outright denies the truth of the Word of God (3:4).
3. Eve begins to rationalize the wrong she was about to do (3:6).
4. They sin (3:7).

G. Result of the Fall:

1. The serpent was condemned to crawl (3:14).
2. Satan was set at enmity with the seed of the woman and permitted to give Christ a painful but not deadly wound (3:15). However, Satan was condemned to a deadly wound.
3. Eve and women were assigned pain in childbirth and submission to their husbands (3:16).
4. Adam and men were assigned to unpleasant labor because of the cursing of the ground (3:17-19).
5. The race experienced broken fellowship with God or spiritual death, physical death, and exclusion from the benefits of Eden. Adam and Eve's sin changed the course of history and the lives of all their descendants (Rom 5:12-21).

V. PERSONAL SIN

A. Origin of Sin:

1. In relation to God: God is not the responsible author of sin (Isaiah 45:7; James 1:13), yet God allowed for the entrance of sin.
2. In relation to angels: First to sin (Isaiah 14; Ezekiel 28)
3. In relation to man: Sin began for man with Adam (Gen 3:6; I Tim 2:14).

B. Definition of Sin:

1. Erroneous or incomplete definitions:

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- a. Sin is an illusion -- it doesn't really exist; this is the view of Christian Science.
- b. Sin is an eternal principle of evil outside of God and independent of Him (Zoroaster).
- c. Sin is selfishness -- not inclusive enough.

2. The theological definition of sin

- a. "Sin is any want of conformity to the character of God, whether it be in act, disposition, or state." Chafer

Sin is sinful because it is different from what God is.

- b. "Anything that does not conform to the glory of God." Ryrie
I Jn 3:4 says that it is lawlessness, thus any deviation from God's commands, A summary statement is found in I Cor 10:31 where believers are told to do everything to the glory of God.

C. The Remedy for Personal Sin

1. Forgiveness (negative) God removes sin (Eph 1:7)
2. Justification (positive) We are declared righteous (Rom 5:1)

VI THE SIN NATURE

A. Meaning:

1. It is the capacity to do that which is contrary to God (Eph 2:3)
2. Man is totally depraved.

This "does not mean that everyone is as thoroughly depraved in his actions as he could possibly be, nor that everyone will indulge in every form of sin, nor that a person cannot appreciate and even do acts of goodness; but it does mean that the corruption of sin extends to all men and to all parts of all men so that there is nothing within the natural man that can give him merit in God's sight." Ryrie

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3. The following HAS become corrupt
 - a. Man's intellect (II Cor 4:4; Rom 1:28)
 - b. Man's conscience (I Tim 4:2)
 - c. Man's will (Rom 1:28)
 - d. Man's heart (Eph 4:18)
 - e. Man's total being (Rom 1:18-3:20)

B. The Result of the Sin Nature

1. Depravity
2. Spiritual death (Eph 2:1-3; Eph 4:18,19). This can be corrected by new birth which leads to new life.

C. The Transmission of the Sin Nature

Passed on immediately through our parents

D. The Remedy of the Sin Nature

1. Redemption
2. The gift of the Holy Spirit -- Our old nature is dead positionally (Rom 6). "We realize victory over the old nature through the power of the Holy Spirit." Ryrie

"It is never said to be removed or eradicated in this life, but for the Christian there is overcoming power provided through the indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:4; Gal 5:16,17)." Chafer

VII IMPUTED SIN

- A. Meaning: to put on someone's account
- B. Fact: We all sinned in Adam (Rom 5:12).
- C. Penalty: We have a sin nature and we die (Rom 5:12-14).

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D. Remedy: imputed righteousness (Rom 5:17).

Three imputations are set forth in Scriptures:

1. The sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity (Rom 5:12-14)
2. The sin of man is imputed to Christ (II Cor 5:21)
3. The righteousness of God is imputed to those who believe (II Cor 5:21)

VIII THE CHRISTIAN'S SIN

A. Introduction: God's standard is perfection. But complete holiness is unattainable in this life (I Jn 1:7-10)

B. The enemies of the Christian

1. The world (I Jn 2:15-17)
2. The devil (counterfeiting) (Eph 6:10-18)
3. The flesh/old nature (Gal 5:16-21)

C. The Preventives of Sin in the Christian Life

1. The Word (Ps 119:11)
2. The constant intercession of Christ (Jn 17:15 Heb 7:25)
3. The work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life
 - a. Teacher (Jn 16:13)
 - b. Intercessor in prayer life (Rom 8:26-27)
 - c. Guidance into service (I Cor 12:7)
 - d. Helper (Jn 14:26 & 15:26)

D. The Penalties Connected with the Believer's Sin

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1. Grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30)
2. Loses his joy/peace (Gal 5:22)
3. Makes the Christian a stumbling block (I Jn 2:10)
4. Loses confidence in prayer (I Jn 3:19-22)
5. Has a sense of shame at the Lord's coming (I Jn 2:28)
6. Loses fellowship with God and fellow believers (I Jn 1:6)
7. Receives chastisement from God for persistent sin (Heb 12:6)
8. Receives church discipline for certain persistent sin (I Cor 5:4-5)
9. May receive physical death (I Cor 11:30)

E. The Remedy of the Christian's Sin

Confession (I Jn 1:9). Meaning: to say the same thing as

AN EXAMINATION OF LIFE AFTER DEATH EXPERIENCES

Woody Allen expressed the sentiments of many when he stated, "Who cares about achieving immortality through achievements? I'm interested in achieving immortality through not dying." Mankind has always feared death (Heb 2:15), and rightly so. Death is one of the great motivators towards the consideration of our need for a relationship with God. However, in recent years new hope has emerged for those desiring heaven without the bother of a commitment to Christ.

In the 1970's a book by Raymond Moody, *Life after Life*, made a tremendous impact with numerous and believable stories of people coming back from the dead. Those returning to life often reported similar experiences. A composite experience includes moving through a long, dark tunnel (after being pronounced dead), watching resuscitation efforts from "outside" one's body, being greeted by relatives or friends who had died earlier, encountering a being of light who evaluated the life and who forgives, then being asked to return to this life, and, in every case, returning to this life.

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Many Christians jumped on the "life after life" bandwagon thinking that these experience were adding much information about the afterlife that the Bible had neglected. Most Christians cooled their enthusiasm a bit when more careful analysis of these events proved to contradict the Scriptures. For example, Moody said, "Through all my research I have not heard a single reference to a heaven or a hell anything like the customary picture to which we are exposed in this society. Indeed, many persons have stressed how unlike their experiences were to what they had been lead to experience in their religious training.... In most cases, the reward punishment model of the afterlife is abandoned and disavowed, even by many who had been accustomed to thinking in these terms. They found, much to their amazement, that even when their most apparently awful sinful deeds were made manifest before the being of light, the being responded not with anger or rage, but rather only with understanding and even with humor." In other words one of the neat hat-tricks was to remove man's fear of the judgment contrary to Heb 9:27. For example, Dr. George Ritchie, a psychiatrist and a Presbyterian who had an out-of-body experience reported that it changed his conventional views on heaven and hell: "I saw no hell-fire, no heads rolling in the streets. I know beyond a doubt that the Christ I saw will accept everyone, good or bad, even those who didn't believe in Him." An interesting sideline to all of this is the cultural stamp that the experiences had. Most American saw religious figures and religion determined the identity of the figure: no Christian patient saw a Hindu deity, and no Hindu saw Jesus.

EMBRACED BY THE LIGHT

Now, twenty years later a new book dealing with the same type of experiences has taken the United States by storm. The book entitled Embraced by the Light witten by Betty Eadie has been at the top of the New York best seller's list for over a year. Eadie has appeared on 20-20 and, as with Raymond Moody years before, many in the Christian community have been influenced by her experience. It must be kept in mind that many have claimed to return from the dead during the past twenty years, but for the most part, little attention has been paid to these people. For some reason Embraced by the Light has caught the attention of the public once again.

Mrs Eadie's experience is similar to those reported in Moody's book. She also teaches the same nonjudgmental Saviour of light, "It was the most unconditional love I have ever felt, and as I saw his arms open to receive me I went to him and received his complete embrace and said over and over, 'I'm home. I'm home'" (p41). And while Eadie admits that Jesus is the only door by which anyone ever reaches heaven, she assures us that all will eventually

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surrender to Him and move into His presence. Some, especially atheists and great sinners will spend considerable time in a black mass of love and warmth until they recognize Him, but they will all "eventually learn to move on to accept the greater warmth and security of God" (p84,85).

Concerning this error of universalism the Scriptures have much to say:

Matt 25:41; Rev 20:14,15 -- Those who have rejected Christ will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

Heb 9:27 -- Judgement awaits us after death. For the unsaved that judgment will result in the second death (Rev 20:14,15).

For the believer it will result in rewards won or lost (I Cor 3:11-15).

Luke 16:19-31 -- Our life on earth will determines our eternal destiny.

John 14:6; Acts 4:12 -- Eternal life can only be found in Jesus Christ. Therefore all religions do not lead to the same place. Eadie claims however, "All religions upon the earth are necessary because there are people who need what they teach" (p45).

Matt 7:13,14

OTHER DOCTRINAL ERRORS:

Eadie's book goes beyond the earlier teachings of Moody and others to teach a more New Age agenda. In several important areas we catch the New Age influence in what she claims to have experienced:

Eternal existence of the human spirit

Throughout her book Eadie asserts that our human spirit has eternally existed (p31). We were with God at creation, we have always been in His presence (p44). Some spirits however have chosen to go to earth, either to fulfill some mission (pp47-49), or to learn lessons that would help them mature. When we come to earth we often come as friends or family of those spirits that we were close to in heaven (p92). Spirits in heaven can have at least some influence over the affairs of mankind on earth (p92). At death the body decays but the spirit returns to heaven. Since this is true, receiving Christ as Savior is a non-issue since all human spirits are simply on a temporary mission on earth anyway.

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A false view of Jesus Christ

Not only is He viewed as a nonjudgmental, totally accepting grandfather image, but He is also a totally separate being God, "I understood, to my surprise, that Jesus was a separate being from God, with his own divine purpose" (p47). "I understood that he was the Son of God, though he himself was also a God" (p44).

The link between the spirit world and the human world

The following are some examples: Spirits often inspire humans for there is a dynamic link between our world and theirs (p48). There exists positive and negative energies in the universe that can be controlled by our thoughts and words (pp55-58). This includes power over illness through the spirit and the mind (p62) -- yet verbalization is needed for healing (pp64-65). There is a oneness between us and the plant world, as well as with God, "I felt God in the plant, in me, his love pouring into us. We were all one!" (p81).

THE SATANIC CONNECTION

It is possible that many of these experiences may have a physical explanation, (e.g. drug induced, or the normal process of a dying brain) and yet there is a sameness about the experiences that gives pause to think that something supernatural is going on. Since the experiences of these people are out of line with Scripture, we can be certain that they are not being given a true glimpse of eternity. Therefore, the possibility exists that Satan is involved in many of these episodes. Many researchers reject this idea on the grounds that those who "come back" always spread the message of love and forgiveness rather than hate and destruction, and they conclude that Satan would not do this. However, they are ignorant of Satan's schemes. II Cor 11:14 informs us that Satan can disguise himself as an angel of light. Could the being of light that people claim to meet at death be Satan rather than Christ as supposed? In Heb 2:14,15 we find that Christ died to deliver us from the fear of death. How clever it would be of him to counterfeit even this work by telling people that at death we have nothing to fear, for there is no judgment. And yet, those without Christ have much to fear. The Bible speaks of two opposite approaches to death. The first is to deny its seriousness. This was Satan's approach in the garden (Gen 3:1-5). Undoubtedly, he is still up to his old tricks. The other approach is to take death seriously, and to recognize that it can only be overcome through faith in Jesus Christ. In Isaiah 8:19-20 we find that God is angry at a people who consulted occultists to find out about life instead of consulting Him. He is saying that they had better and more reliable information than what witches, mediums and voices from the grave could provide. They had the written testimony of God Himself -- go read and believe it.