

Soul [Nehphesh] in the Old Testament

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(Strong spells it "nehphesh" Hebrew word #5315). If the "soul" is an immortal "immaterial, invisible part of man" (Vine), why is this Hebrew word that is translated soul throughout the Old Testament translated "living creature" when it is speaking of animals in Genesis 1:21; 1:24; 2:19; 9:10; 9:12; 9:15; 9:16 when the same Hebrew word [nehphesh] is translated "living soul" in Genesis 2:7 when it is speaking of a person? In the Hebrew, if this were an immaterial, immortal part of a person, it would also be an immaterial, immortal part of animals.

[1] Genesis 1:20 "life" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures" [soul - nehphesh] (American Standard Version). "The moving creature that has life" (footnote in KJV).

[2] Genesis 1:21 "living creature" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] "And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature [soul - nehphesh] that moves wherewith the water swarmed."

[3] Genesis 1:24 "living creature" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] "And God said, Let the earth bring forth living creatures [soul - nehphesh] after their kind, cattle, and creeping things, and beasts of the earth."

[4] Genesis 1:30 "life" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] "And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the heavens, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is life" [soul - nehphesh]. "A living soul" used referring to animals. Animals are "a living soul."

All four times soul is used in genesis one, it is used referring to animals, not to a person. Animals were souls before any man existed.

"Then God said, 'Let the waters teem with swarms of LIVING SOULS [soul-nehpheshs], and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.' And God created the great sea monsters, and every LIVING SOUL [soul - nehphesh] that moves with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind; and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth LIVING SOULS [soul-nehpheshs] after their kind: cattle and creeping thing and beasts of the earth after their kind'; and it was so...and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creeps upon the earth, wherein there is LIFE [soul - nehphesh], I have given every green herb for meat" [Genesis 1:20-30].

[5] Genesis 2:7 "A living soul" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to a person]. **The first time the King James Version translated nehphesh into "soul," most other translations did not agree with it, not even the New King James Version.** "Man became a living being" New King James Version. Man became:

- "A living being" New King James Version, New American Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, New International Version, Amplified Version, The New American Bible.
- "A living person" New Century Version, The Living Bible, New Living Translation.
- "A living creature" The Revised English Bible, Young's Literal Translation.
- "Life" Contemporary English Version.

The first time nehphesh is used referring to a person, most translations apply it to the living breathing being or person, not to an invisible inter part of a person. Adam being spoken of as a "living being" [nehphesh] proves he was mortal, not immortal, just as all "living beings" [nehphesh] are mortal, not immortal. How can this be one of the proof texts used to prove Adam was made with an immortal soul? If it proves Adam had an immortal soul, then it proves that fish have an immortal soul.

[6] Genesis 2:19 "living creature" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals]. "Every beast...every bird...whatsoever the man called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

[7] Genesis 9:4 "life" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals].

[8] Genesis 9:5 "lives" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man].

[9] Genesis 9:5 "*life*" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man].

[10] Genesis 9:10 "*living creature*" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals].

[11] Genesis 9:12 "*living creature*" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals].

[12] Genesis 9:15 "*living creature*" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man and animals].

[13] Genesis 9:16 "*living creature*" [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man and animals].

In genesis 9:4-16 the same word is used for both man and animals seven times in the same passage.

- To animals five times, to man four times
- THREE TIMES TO ANIMALS ALONE
- TWO TIMES TO ANIMALS AND MAN TOGETHER
- TWO TIMES TO MAN ALONE

"But flesh with the LIFE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat. And surely your blood, the blood of your LIVES [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man], will! require; at the hand of every beast will! require it: and at the hand of men, even at the hand of every man's brother, will! require the LIFE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man] of man. Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made he men. And you, be you fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein. And God spoke unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you and with your seed after you; And every LIVING CREATURE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] that is with you, of the fowl, and the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you; neither shall the waters of a flood cut off all flesh be any more; neither shall there any more be a flood to destroy the earth. And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you and every LIVING CREATURE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to animals] that is with you, for perpetual generation: I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud: And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every LIVING CREATURE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man and animals] of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh. And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every LIVING CREATURE [soul - nehphesh, used referring to man and animals] of all flesh that is upon the earth."

All four times in Genesis 1, soul [nehphesh] is used referring to animals, not to a person. IN TEN OF THE FIRST THIRTEEN TIMES SOUL [NEHPHESH] IS USED IT IS USED REFERRING TO ANIMALS, but the King James Version hides this by using different words, and most who read the King James Version never know it. NEHPHESH IS TRANSLATED "SOUL" ONLY ONE TIME OF THE FIRST THIRTEEN TIMES IT IS USED in the King James Version; but it is not translated "soul" in any of the first thirteen times it is used in the New King James Version, New American Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version, or New International Version. Mankind has the same soul [life - nehphesh] as the other "*living creatures*." He does not differ from other living creatures [soul - nehphesh] by having a soul [nehphesh] that cannot die. His dominion over other living creatures [Other nehpheshes - souls] is not his nehphesh.

Mike Willis says expositors have generally appealed to Genesis 2:7 to prove that all men are born with and now have immortal spirits. However, in 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul has clearly expounded the meaning of the Hebrew words nehphesh, chayyah. "The living soul" of Genesis 2:7 is the natural body of this passage. He says this corresponds with the book of Genesis itself because the same construction is used in Genesis 1:24 to describe animals. When Moses recorded that God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and he became a living soul, what the writer of Genesis was saying was that the dust of the earth began to have animal life and does not prove that a person has an immortal spirit (soul); rather it states that a person has animal life. All men possess animal life through Adam. A Commentary On Paul's First Epistle To the Corinthians, Page 578, 1979. For one who knows the Bible as he does and believes a person has an immortal soul, yet says, the living soul of Genesis 2:7 is the natural body, proves beyond doubt that a living soul is not an immortal inter part of a person.

Guy N. Woods says the first time in Genesis 1:20 the word soul is used is from the Hebrew *nehphesh* where it is assigned to fish, birds, and creeping things. He says it is clear that the soul in these passages does not refer to anything peculiar to the constitution of man, but it signifies, as its usage denotes, and the lexicons affirm, any creature that breathes. "What Is The Soul Of Man," Gospel Advocate, 1985, Number 21.

Adam Clarke "*Nephesh chayah*; a general term to express all creatures endued with animal life, in any of its infinitely varied gradations, from the half reasoning elephant down to the stupid potto, or lower still, to the polype, which seems equally to share the vegetable and animal life."

In the first nine chapters of genesis soul [nehphesh] is the animal life, which both a person and animals have in common. How did the translators know when it changed to an invisible inter immortal part of a person, which animals do not have?

- **Soul [nehphesh] has been used more often with reference to animals than it is with reference to persons.**
- **Note: both man and animals are souls, living beings. We are a soul, not have a soul. If we have a soul, have a living being in us, then we are one living being with another living being living in us, a living being living in another living being.**

The doctrine that we have a soul living in us and it is this soul that will be saved or tormented forever is the foundation of many of the errors that have divided the churches. That we are a soul (a living being), not have a soul living in us is one of the most fundamental and most misunderstood teaching in the bible.

[14] Genesis 12:5 "*And the **people** [soul - nehphesh] whom they had acquired*" New King James Version ["*soul*" in King James Version].

[15] Genesis 12:13 "*That I [soul - nehphesh] may live because of you*" New King James Version ["*soul*" in King James Version].

[16] Genesis 14:21 "*Give me the **persons** [soul - nehphesh] and take the goods*" King James Version.

[17] Genesis 17:14 "That person [soul - nehphesh] shall be cut off" New King James Version.

[18] Genesis 19:17 "*Escape for your life [soul - nehphesh]*" King James Version.

[19] Genesis 19:19 "*Saving my life [soul - nehphesh]*" King James Version.

In the first nineteen times nehphesh is used it is translated soul only three times in the King James Version, none in the new King James Version, new American Standard Version, new revised standard version, or new international version.

[20] Genesis 19:20 "That my life [soul - nehphesh] may be saved" New American Standard Version [Soul for the fourth time in the King James Version and first time in the New King James Version].

[21] Genesis 23:8 "*If it be your **mind** [soul - nehphesh]*" King James Version.

[22] Genesis 27:4 "*So that I may bless you before I [soul - nehphesh] die*" New Revised Standard Version.

UP TO GENESIS 27:4 NEHPHESH IS TRANSLATED "SOUL" IN THE KING JAMES VERSION FOUR TIMES AND THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION ONE TIME. EVEN THEN IT IS NOT TRANSLATED "SOUL" IN MANY OTHERS TRANSLATIONS.

- "*So that I [nehphesh] may bless you before I die*" Revised Standard Version, New Revised Standard Version.
- "*So that I [nehphesh] may give you my blessing before I die*" New International Version.
- "*So that I [nehphesh] may give you my blessing before I die*" Revised English Bible.
- "*To give you my [nehphesh] blessing before I die*" Amplified Bible.

- "That I [nehphesh] may give you my special blessing before I die" New American Bible.
- "Then I [nehphesh] will bless you before I die" New Century Version.
- "Then I [nehphesh] will pronounce the blessing that belongs to you, my firstborn son, before I die" New Living Translation.
- "I [nehphesh] want to eat it once more and give you by blessing before I die" Contemporary English Version.
- "That I [nehphesh] may eat of it, [preparatory] to giving you [as my first-born] my blessing before I die" Amplified Bible.
- "That my **soul** [nehphesh] may bless thee before I die" King James Version. How would Isaac's son know if he were blessed by an "immaterial invisible" no substance part of a person that he could not see? By this time, hundreds of years after Genesis 1:1, the King James translators must have been desperate to be able to put "soul" into the Bible.

Nehphesh has been used 21 times before the New King James Version used "soul" for the first time, but even then the translators of many versions have chosen not to translate it "soul." In genesis "nehphesh" is not an immortal "immaterial, invisible part of man," but it is the life, living creature, living being, any living thing, whether animals, fish, or man. If the translators had continued to translate nehphesh as life, living creature, living being, or person, as they did in the first twenty-one times it is used, there may not be the divisions there are today. Why did they not translate nehphesh into soul in the first part of the bible? Maybe because they thought it would have made animals have souls, and they did not believe animals could have souls. I find it difficult to see how anyone could not call their honesty into question for it is undeniable that they put their belief over the word of God and deliberately hid the truth from their readers; deliberately hid the truth from you.

[23] Genesis 32:30 "My life [soul - nehphesh] is preserved" King James Version. Most translations use "life" in this passage for a soul that cannot perish does not need to be preserved.

[24] Genesis 34:3

- "His **heart** [soul - nehphesh] was drawn to Dinah" New International Version.
- "He was deeply **attracted** [nehphesh] to Dinah" New American Standard Version.
- "His **soul** [nehphesh] clave unto Dinah" King James Version.

[25] Genesis 34:8

- "My son Shechem has his **heart** [nehphesh] on your daughter" New International Version.
- "My son Shechem is in **love** [nehphesh] with this girl" Revised English Bible.
- "The **heart** [nehphesh] of my son Shechem longs for your daughter" New Revised Standard Version.
- "The **soul** [nehphesh] of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter" King James Version.

[26] Genesis 35:18

- "As she **breathed** [nehphesh] her last-for she was dying" New International Version.
- "Then with her last **breath**, [nehphesh] as she was dying" Revised English Bible.
- "As her **soul** [nehphesh] was departing (for she died)" King James Version.

[27] Genesis 36:6 "All the **persons** [nehphesh] of his house" King James Version. Genesis 37:21 "Let us not kill **him** [nehphesh]" King James Version.

[28] Job 12:10 "In whose hand is the **soul** [soul - nehphesh, used referring to **animals**] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." "The life of every living thing" New American Standard Bible.

[29] Job 41:21 "His **breath** [soul - nehphesh, used referring to an **animal**, possibly a crocodile]."

[30] Isaiah 19:10 "All that make sluices and ponds for fish [soul - nehphesh, used referring to **animals, fish**]" King James Version.

[31] Jeremiah 2:24 "A wild ass used to the wilderness, that snuffed up the wind in her [soul - nehphesh, used referring to an **animal**] desire."

[32] Numbers 31:28 "And levy a tribute unto the Lord of the men of war which went out to battle: one **soul** [nehphesh-used referring to man and **animals**] of five hundred, both of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses and of the sheep."

"So carefully has the translation of nehphesh been guarded in relation to animals as 'souls,' that we can't help but wonder if it were not done intentionally to conceal the fact that animals are souls as well as men." David J. Heinizman, "Man Became A Living Soul."

[34 to 870] It would be too long to quote about 870 times the Hebrew word nehphesh is in the Old Testament with just over one-half being translated "soul" in King James Version [Wigram, Page 829, Old Testament].

1. SOUL About 473 times. Not once do any of them imply anything about life beyond the grave or about the soul being immortal.
2. LIFE About 122 times.
3. PERSON About 26 times.
4. MIND About 15 times.
5. HEART About 15 times.
6. PERSONAL PRONOUNS 44 + times [yourselves, themselves, her, me, he, his, himself].
7. ALL OTHERS about 200 times [man, creature, living being, own, any, living thing, lives, the dead, dead body, kills, slays, slay him, mortally, discontented, ghost, breath, will, appetite, hearty desire, desire, pleasure, lust, deadly, fish]. All 870 times it is associated with the activity of a living being, including dying, and it never implies anything about life after the death of the living being. None of them are an immortal inter part of a person. They are a living being that can die, be killed, or be dead. **Nehphesh is always associated with the activity of earthly breathing beings, both of person(s) and animal(s). It never implies anything about life beyond the grave. IT IS NEVER TRANSLATED "SPIRIT."**

Can one word be rightly translated this way? Can a word that is not a pronoun be rightly translated into a pronoun as it is in the King James Version? How could the translators know when to change the noun into a pronoun? **NO ONE READING MANY OF THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE WOULD HAVE ANY WAY OF KNOWING THAT ALL THESE WORDS ARE TRANSLATIONS (OR MISTRANSLATIONS) OF ONLY ONE WORD.** Did the translators do so because they wanted to make a person be an "immortal being," and more than a "living creatures?" In almost one half of the times nehphesh is used in the Old Testament, even the King James translators could not translate it "soul." When the all-knowing God used just one word, why did the translators use many words and change it as they wish to from a noun to a pronoun? Did they think that for all the years from Adam unto Christ, God thought people could understand just one word; but now about forty words are needed to translate one word? If one word were all that was needed from Adam to the King James Version, why would God's one word not be enough today? Do the translators think they have improved the Hebrew Old Testament? The use of many words came when the Catholic Church brought in unconditional immortality, and they had to get it into the Bible. The Hebrew manuscripts still have just one word - nehphesh, which was the one word God inspired. Were the translators inspired to change it to many words?

Nehphesh is translated "soul" far fewer times in the New American Standard Version and in most other translations, including the New King James Version, than it is in the King James Version. Were they going as far as they dared to in correcting the King James Version?

The way "soul" is understood and used today in English (an inter undying PART of a person) makes putting the word "soul" in a translation for the English people today be a false and deliberately misleading translation; for it makes it where today's English reader cannot know what God said, and will understand only what the prejudiced outlook the translators wanted their readers to understand **WHEN THE WORD "SOUL" IS UNDERSTOOD AS IT IS USED TODAY.** Without much study of Bible words, which most Bible reader will never do, they cannot know what God said to them when they read the word "soul" and will think that the outlook of the translator, which seems to be somewhat prejudice, is the word of God. God's word has been deliberately replaced with the teaching of man [Matthew 15:9] in a way that will have more influence on our conception of what our nature is and the nature of all living beings than any other question.