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A TRANSLATION CONSPIRACY

By Andrew Brown

The Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and as far as the division of soul and spirit (Heb. 4:12, *NASB* throughout). Have you considered that God's Word distinguishes between *soul* and *spirit*? Most blend the two words and use them interchangeably without realizing it. In particular, the English translators have repeatedly hidden the word for soul where its appearance is necessary to convey vital information. This deficiency in translation makes obtaining an accurate understanding nearly impossible without looking to the Hebrew and Greek. With such twisting toward the bias of "teamed" men, it is not surprising that believers and nonbelievers alike hold the same belief regarding soul. A word study on soul (Heb.-*nephesh* and Gk.-*psuche*) is greatly needed. Let believers in Christ be transformed by the renewing of their minds, taking a stand upon the facts of God's perfect Word rather than conforming their belief to the world's popular flow.

The Law of Divine Interchange links the Hebrew word *nephesh* and the Greek word *psuche* by numerous New Testament quotes of Old Testament passages. Romans 11:13 quotes Elijah saying, **Lord, they have Idled your prophets, they have torn down your altars, and I alone am left and they ate seeking my life** (*psuche*). In place of the Greek word *psuche*, the quoted passage in 1 Kings 19: 10 uses the Hebrew *nephesh*. (Also see Mark 12:30 with Deut. 6:45, I Cor. 15:45 with Gen. 2:7, Acts 2:27 with Psa. 16:10.) Thus, Scripture solidifies that *nephesh* is the Hebrew word equivalent to the Greek word *psuche*. The words appear 859 times in Scripture (754 and 105 times respectively), yet only two-thirds of these occurrences are translated as "soul"! Once aware of the passages where the hidden words should appear, the changes are too significant for the lover of God's truth to ignore. The translations hide the truth. Essential facts have been

purposely concealed through the use of numerous different words creating a conspiracy which all major translators have followed.

Since **every word of God is tested** (Prov. 30:5) the usage of the original language languages of soul contains perfect harmony. In John 6, many followers abandoned Jesus due to His "hard teaching." Jesus asked the Twelve Apostles, **You do not want to go away also, do you?** Our attitude should resemble Peter's response, **Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life** (John 6:67-68). If the facts in Scripture show our current belief to be lacking, let us be faithful and change our minds accordingly! The true question here is: "What is a soul (*nephesh*)?"

The first occurrences should change anyone from the traditional error, where *nephesh* refers to animals! **Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures** (Heb.-chay *nephesh*) (Gen. 1:20). **God created the great sea monsters and every living creature (*chay nephesh*) that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird after its kind** (Gen. 1:21). Fish and birds are *souls* according to these verses. Land animals are also souls (Gen. 1:24). God lists all these together in Genesis 1:30 as well as when Adam names all the living *souls* in Genesis 2:19. The conspiracy mistranslates every occurrence where animals are represented as *souls*. Only in the fifth occurrence does God use *nephesh* in reference to the man He created. In that reference to man, translations are split whether to reveal man is a *soul* or not.

The LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (*chay nephesh*) (Gen. 2:7). No human *soul* existed before this event; man *became* a living soul at his formation. This dispels the common myth that man possesses a *soul*, instead revealing that man **is** a *soul*. Occurrences of *soul/nephesh* throughout Scripture refer to the whole person—including and never apart from their body. As when Abraham said, **that I (*nephesh*) may live on account of you** (Gen. 12:13). People are *souls* and accurately speak of themselves as such using 'I' or "my." Isaac said, **so that my soul may bless you before I die** (Gen. 27:4). People say 'that poor soul' or "bless your soul." David said, **Many are saying of my soul, there is no deliverance for him in God** (Psa. 3:2).

As we think upon the Bible's use of *soul*, we come to passages where *nephesh* is linked to blood. Only you shall not eat flesh with its life (*nephesh*),

that is, its blood (Gen. 9:4). A metaphor is used to convey that anything possessing blood is a soul. Therefore, *soul* is not God's distinguishing factor between animals and men. After Noah's flood God said, I will remember My covenant, which is between Me and you and every living creature (Heb.-*chay nephesh*) of all flesh (Gen. 9:16). For the life (*nephesh*) of the flesh is in the blood (Lev. 17:11). Scripture metaphorically teaches that blood holds life and any creature with blood, or capable of being alive, is a *soul*.

If life is taken away from the *living* (Heb.-*chay*) *soul*, it becomes a *dead* (Heb.-*muth*) *soul*. The high priest shall not approach any dead person (*muth nephesh*) (Lev. 21:11). There is no doubt that *muth* means "dead." The translators could see this but purposefully excluded this fact for then "DEAD SOUL," a straight-forward translation, would result. All the days of his separation to the Lord he shall not go near to a dead person (*muth nephesh*) (Num. 6:6). The translation of these passages is so misleading readers cannot understand that they speak of dead souls unless they look up the words in their original language. (Consider passages where God plainly testifies to dead souls but hidden by translation: Lev. 19:28, 21:1, 11, 22:4, Num. 5:2, 6:6, 11, 9:6, 7, 10, 19:11, 13, Hag. 2:13, Rev. 8:9, 16:3). As readers embark on their consideration of Scripture's facts regarding soul, they cannot overlook that God's Word teaches that souls "die."

Contrary to popular misconception, the Bible also specifies in over 50 passages that killing a soul is possible. Joshua struck [the city] and every person (*nephesh*) who was in it with the edge of the sword (Josh. 10:30). This sentence is repeated often in Joshua, showing souls being killed. This is only surprising to those who have been deceived by the translation conspiracy. Ezekiel proclaimed the Lord's words, **My people to put to death some (*nephesh*) who should not die and to keep others (*nephesh*) alive who should not live** (Ezek. 13:19). Some souls deserve death while other souls deserve to stay alive (Ezek. 22:27). There were purifying rules for whoever has handled any person (*nephesh*) (Num. 31:19). A city of refuge was set up that the manslayer who has killed any person (*nephesh*) unintentionally may flee there (Num. 35:11). God wrote in His perfect law that, **If a man takes the life (*nephesh*) of any human being, he shall surely be put to death. The one who has taken the life (*nephesh*) of an animal shall make it good life (*nephesh*) for life (*nephesh*)** (Lev. 24:17-18). Clearly, God desired honorable treatment of souls, and

makes a distinction between the value of human and animal souls. There are many simple, straight-forward passages like these that, if translated consistently, demonstrate souls being killed. Matthew 10:28 (see Seed & Bread No. 81 for explanation) is openly translated *soul* and popularly referenced, yet it must be considered and understood in light of the plethora of other references regarding souls and death.

Thankfully, the Bible also teaches dead human *souls* will be raised. **O Lord, you have brought up my soul from Sheol (Psa. 30:3). For You have rescued my soul from death (Psa. 116:8).** By laying down His own soul, Jesus paid the costly penalty to redeem our sinful souls, **The Good Shepherd lays down His life (Gk.-*psuche*) for the sheep (John 10:11), Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life (*psuche*) a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).** The Lord's sacrifice of His soul paid the ransom price of our soul that was destined for the second death. All the dead souls will be raised to life for the judgement.

The fact that translators have employed many words besides *soul* in the verses already cited has kept a multitude of *souls* from seeing the truth in over 300 passages where the *soul* can be saved or delivered and is subject to death. Consider a few additional verses and how easy the translation makes it to be unaware that you are learning about *souls*: David said King Saul was **lying in wait for my life (*nephesh*) to take it (1 Sam. 24:11)**, The prophet Nathan spoke, **please let me give counsel and save your life (*nephesh*) and the life (*nephesh*) of your son Solomon (1 Kings. 1:12).** Solomon's *soul* was in mortal danger similar to Herod wanting to kill baby Jesus, **for those who sought the Child's life (*psuche*) are dead (Matt. 2:20).** Paul quotes that Epaphroditus was **close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life (*psuche*) (Phil. 2:30).**

Space does not allow this to be an exhaustive study, so let the reader be moved to open the Word and embark on his own personal study. Those who choose to see the Bible's facts on soul will come across a secondary definition or metaphor linked to the Hebrew and Greek words *nephesh* and *psuche* in 100-plus passages related to desires, lusts, and passions. This usage is logical as appetites and desires flow from live *souls* to sustain or satisfy. Examples include: My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word (Psa. 119:81). Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy himself (*nephesh*) when he is hungry (Prove 6:30). The righteous has enough to satisfy his appetite (*nephesh*) (Prov. 13:25). Hamor's soul clave unto Dinah the

daughter of Jacob (Gen. 34:3) When he lusted after her. Jesus instructed men **to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength** (Mark 12:30; Deut. 6:45). We can train our *soul/appetite* to pursue and find the true sustenance of a love relationship with the Lord Jesus.

This brief study supplies facts about the *soul* that have been deliberately covered in English translation. Clearly, animals are *souls* as well as any creature with life-giving blood. A *soul* is not some immortal part that exists apart from the flesh but rather can and does die. As Martin Luther declared in his Proposition 27, "the immortality of the soul" doctrine is one of the "endless monstrosities in the Roman dunghill of decretals." Unfortunately, the conspiracy has taken in many more since his time. There are hundreds of passages contradicting this blindly-accepted myth. People may bring up a couple of muddled and misunderstood passages to support their views of the *soul*; however, they are not using the Bible as the guide for their belief but picking and choosing to support what they think they should find. This ignorance is perpetuated by the word for *soul* being hidden in translation in the very passages that would define it by its proper use. When uncovered, let God's Word be read for what He actually said as the believer rises to the opportunity to be close to the truth so loved by the Lord.

Whoever seeks to keep his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it (Luke 17:33). Can you see where God refers to *soul* in this verse, and do you have eyes to see the truth God recorded in His Word 859 times? Our translators have some explaining to do.

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