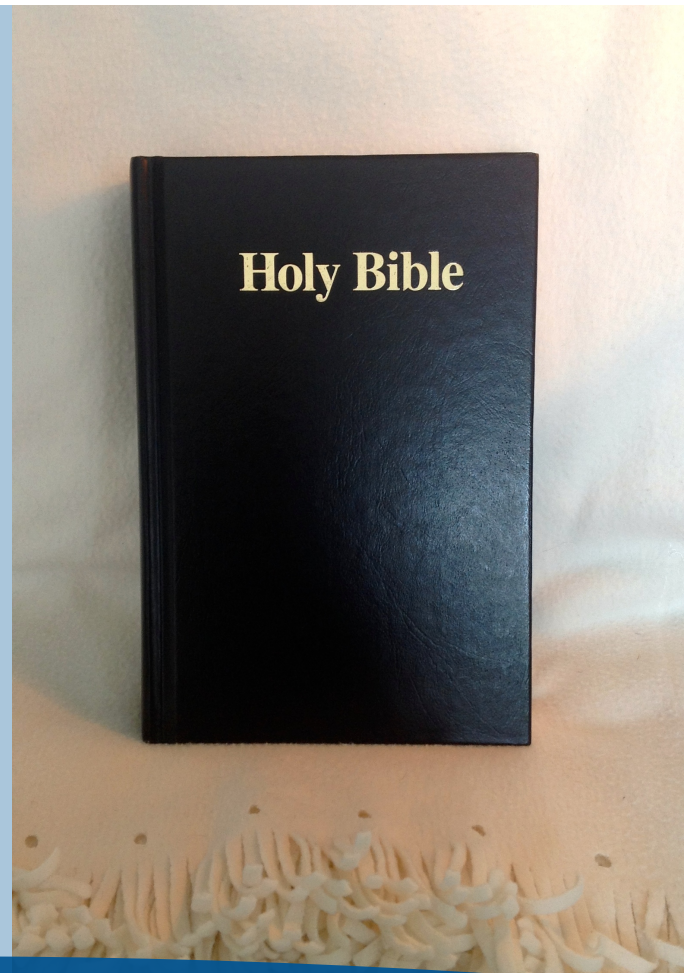


Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself

Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

CONSIDERING
WHAT THE
BIBLE SAYS
ABOUT
THE SOUL



Page 1



@biblelightstand

E-mail info@bibleonline.uk



Bible Lightstand

Webster's dictionary gives the
"theological" usage of the word "soul" as

"The immortal substance of man
which distinguishes him from the beasts."

This also is the traditional view. The Soul is generally regarded as: a spark of the divine - some kind of spirit within us - never dying; the real essence of ourselves, which at death leaves the body and floats off to heaven to live there for ever, in a ghostly 'paradise'.

But what does the Bible say?

THE ORIGINAL WORD FOR SOUL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT IS

(Strongs Concordance ref. 5315) נְפֶשׁ [nephesh /neh·fesh/] "BREATH"
from the verb נָפַח [naphash]"TO TAKE BREATH"

So the original word rendered "soul" in the Old Testament (nephesh) literally means "BREATH" as in breathing. But to breathe, lungs and a body are required, so as a noun nephesh (rendered "soul" 475 times) signifies a being that breathes. The term is used also to signify various aspects of a Being- human or animal. as follows:-

Rendered in KJV-**soul** 475; **life** 117; **person** 29; mind 15; heart 15; **creature** 9; **body** 8; himself 8; yourselves 6; **dead** 5; will 4; desire 4; man 3; themselves 3; any 3; appetite 2; misc 47; 753

We have highlighted in **bold** the (above) renderings we intend to illustrate in the space of this pamphlet.

The lexicon re iterates the senses in which it is used in the bible as follows:-

"1) soul, self, life, creature, person, appetite, mind, living being, desire, emotion, passion"

then it states (properly):-

"1a) that which breathes, the breathing substance or being,"

The above does not fit well with the traditional view. In fact if we consider the Bible usage of the word we will find that:-

1. We find the soul is not exclusive to man
2. We find the original also rendered "**creature**" (9times)
3. We find the original also rendered "**life**"(117 times)
4. We find the "soul" is **not** immortal
5. We find the original also rendered "**person**"(29 times)
6. We find the original also rendered "**body**"(8 times)
7. We find the original also rendered "**dead**"(7 times)
8. We find the original also rendered "**mortally**"(once)

1. We find the soul is not exclusive to man

We find that **soul נִפְשׁ nephesh** is applicable to animal life also, and so is rendered “**creature**” and “**beast**”, a number of times. E.g.-

Leviticus 24:18 And he that killeth a beast shall make it good; beast for beast.

In the original, the 2nd and 3rd occurrences of “**beast**” is
נִפְשׁ nephesh.

The first occurrence is a rendering of two words:

נִפְשׁ בְּהֵמָה nephesh bâhemah.

Bâhemah is the normal word for beast

So **Leviticus 24:18** could be rendered:-

And he that killeth a soul a beast [נִפְשׁ בְּהֵמָה nephesh bâhemah.], shall make it good; **soul** [נִפְשׁ nephesh.] for **soul** [נִפְשׁ nephesh.].

2. We find the original also rendered “creature” (9 times in all) e.g.

GENESIS 1:24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature [נִפְשׁ **nephesh**] after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

This confirms that man and beast have (or are) the same soul, for we read of man:-

GENESIS 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [נִפְשׁ **nephesh**].

So regarding the animals it says they are “living creature” i.e. “living nephesh”
And regarding man (the hebrew is identical) “living soul” that is “living nephesh”

But here (Gen.2:7) regarding man it says: “**breathed into his nostrils the breath of life**”.
Does this indicate immortality?

Well no, we find nothing immortal about “the breath of life” it’s common to man and beast. Breathing “the breath of life” is what constitutes them living souls. When speaking of the great flood, this term, is applied to all breathing things, as:

GENESIS 7:

21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:

22 All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.”

So it is the case with both beast and man, as it says of man that at death:

PSALM 146:4

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

3. We find the original also rendered “life”(117 times in all) e.g.

Elijah complains :-

1 Kings 19:10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even **I only, am left; and they seek my life [נַפְשִׁי nephesh], to take it away.**

נַפְשִׁי nephesh is the original Hebrew for soul in the Old Testament.
ψυχή psuche is the original Greek for soul in the New Testament

These two words are equivalent as we see when the Old Testament is quoted in the New as is this complaint of Elijah as follows:

Romans 11:3 Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and **I am left alone, and they seek my life [ψυχή psuche]**

Here we see that for “life” the original Hebrew of the O.T. is “nephesh” and the original Greek of the N.T. is “psuche” thus these 2 word are equivalent in meaning. In passing we note that the O.T. (1 Kin. 19:10) says “they seek my life [נַפְשִׁי nephesh], **to take it away.**” So it is clear that nephesh-soul- in the sense of “life” refers to mortal natural breathing life which an enemy could “**take.. away**” (kill)

THE ORIGINAL FOR SOUL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS

(Strongs Concordance ref. 5590) ψυχή [psuche /pronounced psoo·khay]

rendered in the KJV-soul 58; life 40; mind 3; heart 1;

The lexicon says (properly) it means:
“1) breath”

Then it lists its significances in the Bible as:

“1a) the breath of life

1a1) the vital force which animates the body and shows itself in breathing

1a1a) **of animals**

1a1b) **of men**”

Again nothing here that fits in with the soul of traditional, on the contrary:

4. We find the “soul” is not immortal

Genesis 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh]

Gen 2:7 is re quoted in the New Testament, where the original hebrew ‘nephesh’ is replaced with the greek ‘psuche’ (in the original) as follows:

1 Corinthians 15:

44 “it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul [ψυχή psuche]; the last Adam was made a quickening [life giving] spirit.

46 Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.”

“53 For this corruptible must **put on incorruption**, and this mortal must **put on immortality**.”

Here we find a number of related facts.

Paul is teaching that immortality is to be attained only by bodily resurrection from the dead (at the last day), that therefore the “**natural body**” (v44) that we now have, would need to be rebuilt and energised by the spirit i.e. “**put on incorruption...put on immortality**”(v53)

Paul calls this “**a spiritual body**”(v44), and contrasts it with the “**natural body**”(v44).

He says that Adam was created merely as a natural body i.e. a “**living soul [ψυχή psuche]**” (v45) and contrasts this with Christ; “**the last Adam**” who by resurrection “**was made a quickening [life giving] spirit**.”(v45)

So just as Adam was the prototype of the “**natural body**”, Christ has become (by resurrection) the prototype (ie a last “Adam”) of the “**spiritual body**”, invested also with the power to bestow this state on the believers in the day of the resurrection.

If we read those verses carefully it is clear Paul is saying that there was nothing immortal about Adam, (or about us); that that “**living soul [ψυχή psuche]**”(v45) that “**Adam was made**” was mortal-not immortal, and would need to “**put on incorruption...put on immortality**”(v53) to be saved.

One of the many Psalms prophetic of Christ says:

Psalm 16:

9 “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh] in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

And again it shows that psuche is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew nephesh when the Psalm is re quoted in the New Testament as follows:

Acts 2:

26 “Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul [ψυχή psuche] in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”

This again shows that the soul is not immortal, as in the case of Christ, (who is the subject of Psalm 16 and Acts 2:26,27), it says his soul was in hell (understanding hell to be the grave), but that it was brought back by resurrection (on the 3rd day) so as not to see corruption. By parenthesis his “soul” (v27) is equated with his “flesh” i.e. body (v26).

Regarding “hell” in Old Testament; the Hebrew usually is:

שְׁאוֹל [shehole] Grave or Pit (Smiths Bible dictionary)

It is a noun derived from the verb ‘shaal’: “demand” [us all-as the grave does]

The Expanded Bible renders Acts 2:27 as follows:

Acts 2:27 “because you will not leave [abandon] me [Literally; my soul/life] in the grave [Literally; Hades; Commentary; the underworld]. You will not let your Holy One experience; [Literally see] decay.”

We notice the translators have included a piece from a “commentary” about Hades being the underworld. But that is only the superstition that the Pagan Greeks attached to the word. Hades actually means “unseen” and was the common Greek word for the ‘unseen place’ i.e. the grave. It is similar with the Old English word Hell. Hell literally signifies ‘to cover’ i.e. to bury (as in a grave). It is still used in the sense of “cover” in the horticulture term, “Helling potatoes” - i.e. covering the potato plants with soil. Hell is found as a particle in words such as Helmet- a head ‘covering’. But tradition has attached to it the old Pagan Greek superstition of an underworld of torment etc. The word “Hell” in the KJV of the Bible always signifies the grave, with but a very few exceptions where the original word is ‘Gehennah’ which is used as a figure of ‘the day of judgment’.

That the soul is not immortal can easily be seen from plain statements in the Bible such as:

Psalm 49:15 But God will redeem my soul [נַפְשִׁי nephesh] from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

Here we find that, to be saved, the soul needs to be “redeemed” from the grave. In other words, the person needs to be resurrected **bodily** (as we saw 1 Cor.15) at the last day. And, as we saw from Psalm 146, there is no consciousness in the grave:-

Ecclesiastes 9:10 Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

Of the days of capital punishment under the Law in Israel, we read that God said:

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul [נַפְשִׁי nephesh] that sinneth, it shall die.

We find similar usage of the word ‘soul’ in the New Testament:-

Acts 3:23 And it shall come to pass, that every soul, [ψυχή psuche] which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

5. We find the original also rendered “person”(29 times in all) e.g.

Numbers 35:30 Whoso killeth any **person**,[נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul] the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses: but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die.

Deuteronomy 27:25 Cursed be he that taketh reward to **slay** an innocent **person** [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul]. And all the people shall say, Amen

Proverbs 28:17

A man that doeth violence to **the blood of any person** [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul] shall flee to the pit; let no man stay him.

So here we find that the “soul” of the bible has blood. It also has bones as implied in the next quote, where:-

6. We find the original also rendered “body”(8 times in all) e.g.

Numbers 19:16 And whosoever toucheth one that is slain with a sword in the open fields, or a dead **body**,[נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul] or a **bone** of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

So whether they touched a whole “dead nephesh” [soul] or just a part of a dead soul (“a bone”) they were rendered ceremonially unclean.

Of course everybody knows that a person has blood, bones and flesh, but how many know that that constitutes “a living soul” in the bible (Gen 2:7), but that when “his breath goeth forth” (Psalm 146) he becomes a dead soul?

Numbers 19:13 Whosoever toucheth the dead **body** [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul] of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean; his uncleanness is yet upon him.

The High Priest was not allowed to render himself ceremonially unclean, as we read:

Leviticus 21:11 Neither shall he go in to any dead **body** [נֶפֶשׁ nephesh/soul], nor defile himself for his father, or for his mother;

7. We find the original also rendered “dead”(7 times in all) e.g.

Numbers 9:6 And there were certain men, who were defiled by the **dead body** [נֶפֶשׁ **nephesh**] of a man, that they could not keep the passover on that day: and they came before Moses and before Aaron on that day:

Here Nephesh(soul) is rendered by the term “dead body”; in the following 2 examples Nephesh is just rendered “dead”:

Numbers 6:11 And the priest shall offer the one for a sin offering, and the other for a burnt offering, and make an atonement for him, for that he sinned by the **dead**, [נֶפֶשׁ **nephesh/soul**] and shall hallow his head that same day.

Leviticus 19:28 Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the **dead**, [נֶפֶשׁ **nephesh/soul**] nor print any marks upon you: I am the Lord.

8. We find the original also rendered “mortally”(once)

Deuteronomy 19:11 But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him **mortally** [נֶפֶשׁ **nephesh/soul**] that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities:

But what of the traditional view of such statements as:

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to **save your souls**.

Is James saying the Gospel will saves souls form going to the underworld? Well the very last verse of his epistle clarifies the matter:

James 5:20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

CONSIDERING WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE SOUL

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