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Is God One Person or Three Persons?

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Trinitarians often claim that the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures never actually say that God is one "Person" like our English word Person. Therefore, they insist that it is possible for God to exist as three divine persons even though no scripture ever says that God is three persons. Yet just as God is not spoken of in scripture as a "Person" with our precise English rendering of that word in Hebrew and Greek, so the original languages of the Bible do not use the precise word for our English word "person" when referencing people either. Thus, it is reasonable to believe that God exists as one Divine Person in a similar way that individual human beings exist as one person.

Although the original languages of the Bible do not use the word "person" when referencing the one true God, the Bible does utilize similar words in Hebrew and Greek which do have the same essential meaning as the English word person. In order to rightly divide the word of truth, we must ask what words Hebrew and Greek speaking people used to describe a person that would indicate the same thing as our English word "person." The answer to this question will prove how many persons God really is.

Hebrew and Greek scholars have noted that the Hebrew and Greek words for heart and soul do have the same essential meaning of the English word person. Interestingly, the Hebrew and Greek words for "heart" and "soul" are equally used for both God and for individual men. Therefore, the Trinitarian claim that God might be more than one person because the word person is not used in scripture is very misleading.

Whenever the Bible uses the Hebrew word "nephesh" (translated into English as a "Soul") to describe God or an individual human being, it always speaks of God and individual human beings as a single soul just like the singular English word person described a single individual. For the Hebrew word "nephesh" can be translated as a "soul" or as a "person." Hence, it is an undeniable fact that the ancient Hebrews and Greeks used words to describe God and man which are translated into English as "heart," "mind," and "soul" to describe what English speaking people normally call a "person."

Genesis 8:21, "Yahweh said IN HIS HEART *(leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person")*, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of MAN'S HEART *(leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person")* is evil from his youth.'"

Genesis 2:7 *(KJV)*, "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** *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*."

Notice that in Genesis 8:21, Yahweh God spoke of Himself as having a single "heart" just like a human being has a single "heart" or "inner person" within the same sentence of inspired scripture. God further said in 1 Samuel 2:35 that He has a single "heart" and a single "Soul" in the selfsame verse.

"And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in **MY HEART** *(leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person"*) and **My SOUL** *(nephesh = "Person"*)."

Here we can clearly see that the same Hebrew words for the soul *(nephesh)* and heart *(leb)* of God is also used for the soul *(nephesh)* and heart *(leb)* of a man. Since God is not a human person *(Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man")*, many sincere Christians believe that God should not be called "a person" at all. However, the English word person has the same essential meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words used for God such as "heart" *(Heb. Leb = "heart" or "inner person"-Strong's – Gen. 8: 1 Sam. 2:35)* and "soul" *(Heb. "nephesh" and Greek "psuché" = "person" (Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology. Edited by Walter A. Elwell))*. Even the King James Version calls God a "Person" in Hebrews 1:3 because "Hypostasis" for God's Substance or Essence of Being literally means a single "Essence of Being" as one "Person" *(Hebrews 1:3 states that the Son is "the brightness of His glory and the **express image of His Person**." The context proves that Jesus is the Father's Person who became a man person)*. In like manner, the Amplified Bible says that "God is One Person" *(Galatians 3:20)*.

The Scriptures are replete with examples to show us that God has one "Mind," one "Heart," one "Spirit," and one "Soul" just like a man has. In fact, the same Hebrew and Greek words are used for the Mind, Heart, Spirit, and Soul of God as the mind, heart, spirit, and soul of a man. God said in Jer. 32:35, "… nor had it entered MY **MIND** *(leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person", Strong's)* that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

In Genesis 8:21, "Yahweh said **IN HIS HEART** *(according to Strong's, leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person")*, 'I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of **MAN'S HEART** *(leb = "heart," by ext. "inner person", Strong's)* is evil from his youth.'"

Just as a single human person is called a person because he has an invisible spiritual heart, so God spoke of Himself as having an invisible Spiritual Heart. Hence, the heart of man and the heart of God speak of a single spirit of a man and a single Spirit of God.

John 4:24 (KJV), "God is a **Spirit** *(pneuma)*: and they that worship **Him** *(as a single Spirit Person)* must worship Him in Spirit and in truth."

James 2:26 (NASB), "For just as the body without the **spirit** (pneuma) is dead, so also faith without works is dead."

Notice that the same Greek word for the "Spirit" of God is the same Greek word for "the spirit" of a man. It is nonsensical to believe that the Spirit of God would be a third God Person distinct from two other distinct God Persons. For how could two of the three alleged distinct God Persons not have their own distinct Hearts or Spirits while remaining distinct Persons? For even a God Person must have His own distinct Heart or Spirit in order to be called a Person. Thus, it is completely ridiculous to affirm that God is a single Spirit while two of the alleged Divine Persons lack their own individual Spirits.

God said in Leviticus 26:30, "And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your carcasses upon the carcasses of your idols, and **MY SOUL** *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)* shall abhor you."

"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** *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 KJV

"Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and **the man became a living being** *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 NIV

"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and **the man became a living person** *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 NLT

Here we can clearly see that the Hebrew word for "soul" used for the Most High God and for man has the same basic meaning as our English word "person." This is a scriptural fact that is backed up even by Trinitarian scholars. Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology says that the Hebrew word for "soul" means an "individual" *("in the plural form it indicates a number of individuals")*, a "being" as a "self," "I" or "me."

Bakers Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology says,
"Frequently in the Old Testament **nephes** *[v,p,n]* **designates the individual** *(Lev 17:10 ; 23:30)*. **In its plural form it indicates a number of individuals** such as Abraham's party *(Gen 12:5)*, the remnant left behind in Judah *(Jer. 43:6)*, and the offspring of Leah (Gen 46:15) … Frequently nephes [v,p,n] takes the place of a personal or reflexive pronoun (Psalm 54:4; Prov. 18:7). Admittedly this movement from the nominal to the pronominal is without an exact borderline. **The Revised Standard Version reflects the above understanding of nepes [v,p,n] by replacing the King James Version "soul" with such translations as "being," "one," "self," "I/me."** " *(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology, Under the definition of soul, Edited by Walter A. Elwell)*

Lutheran scholar Gustav Friedrich Oehler wrote that the Hebrew word for soul means "the whole person."

"…naphshi ("my soul"), naphshekha ("thy soul") may be rendered in Latin egomet, tu ipse; but not ruchi ("my spirit"), ruchakha ("thy spirit")-- **soul standing for the whole person**, as in Genesis 12:5; 17:14; Ezekiel 18:4, etc." *(Oehler, Old Testament Theology, I, 217)*

Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology clearly states that both the Hebrew and Greek words for "soul" can also mean "person."

"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 *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 KJV

"Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 NIV

"Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person *(nephesh = "a soul, living being, life, self, person" – NAS Concordance)*." Genesis 2:7 NLT

Here we can clearly see that the Hebrew word for "soul" used for the Most High God and for man has the same basic meaning as our English word "person." This is a scriptural fact that is backed up even by Trinitarian scholars.

"**Psuché, as its Old Testament counterpart, can indicate the person** *(Acts 2:41 ; 27:37)*. It also serves as the reflexive pronoun designating the self *("I'll say to myself" Luke 12:19 ; "as my witness" 2 Cor. 1:23 ; "share our lives" 1 Thess. 2:8)*." *(Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology. Edited by Walter A. Elwell)*

Since the Hebrew and Greek words for "soul" have the same essential meaning of our English word "person" or "self," the Most High God has to be One Divine Person with a single "Self" existence. It is interesting to note that even the Divine Name of Yahweh essentially means, "The Self Existent One" *(Brown-Driver-Briggs defines Yahweh as, "…**the one who is**: i.e. the absolute and **unchangeable one**, Ri; **the existing**, ever living, as **self-consistent**…")*. Why would the Most High God call Himself "The Self Existent One" while existing as "Three Self Existent Ones?" If God really exists as three coequally distinct true God Persons, then God Himself misled His people by calling Himself only One "Self Existent One."

THE HEBREW BIBLE SPEAKS OF GOD AS ONE SOUL PERSON

In 1 Samuel 2:35 Yahweh God says, "And I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who shall do according to what is in MY HEART and My SOUL [MY PERSON]."

Psalm 11:5, "Yahweh tests the righteous and the wicked, and HIS SOUL [HIS PERSON] hates him that loves violence."

Proverb 6:16, "These six things Yahweh hates, seven are an abomination to HIS SOUL [HIS PERSON]."

Isaiah 1:14, "Your new moons and your scheduled feasts MY SOUL [MY PERSON] hates."

Jeremiah 6:8, "Be warned, O Jerusalem, lest MY SOUL [MY PERSON] be alienated from you."

Jeremiah 15:1, "Even though Moses and Samuel were to stand before Me, MY SOUL [MY PERSON] would not be with this people."

Ezekiel 32:18, "… MY SOUL [PERSON] turned away from her as MY SOUL [MY PERSON] turned away from her sister."

Amos 6:8, "The Lord Yahweh has sworn by HIS OWN SOUL [HIS OWN PERSON]."

Yahweh God NEVER SAYS "My Souls," nor is God ever referenced in scripture by saying "His Souls." It is always "My Soul" or "His Soul" in the singular throughout the Bible! Thus, Yahweh our God as our Heavenly Father must be One Divine Person in His Essence of Being! This is why Hebrew and Greek scholars have often translated the word "nephesh" for "soul" in Hebrew and the word "psyche" for "soul" in Greek as a "person" or "persons" *(depending if the context indicates a singular person or a plurality of persons).*

GREEK SCHOLARS HAVE TRANSLATED PSYCHE AS "SOUL" AND "PERSON"

"So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand **souls (psuché)**." Acts 2:41 NASB
"…because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, **eight persons (psuché)**, were brought safely through water." 1 Peter 3:20, ESV

"…who disobeyed long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah, while the ark was being built. In the ark **a few people, only eight souls (psuché)**, were saved through water." 1 Peter 3:20, BSB

"…who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, **eight persons (psuché)**, were brought safely through the water." 1 Peter 1:20, NASB

Why would Greek scholars translate the same Greek word "psuché" as human "souls" and human "persons" if the meaning of the word psuché does not hold the same essential meaning of our English word for "persons?" The NAS Concordance defines psuché (pronounced 'psoo-khay') as "**heart**, heartily, **life**, lives, mind, minds, **person**, persons, **soul**, souls."

Strong's Concordance defines psuché (pronounced 'psoo-khay') as "(a) the vital breath, breath of **life**, (b) the human **soul**, (c) the soul as the seat of affections and will, (d) **the self**, (e) a human **person**, an **individual**." Thus, there can be no doubt that the word "psuché" has the same essential meaning of our English word for person.

The Greek Word Psuche In The Singular Means One Human Person Just As Psuche In The Singular Mean One Divine Person For God

Matthew 12:18, "Behold, My servant whom I have chosen, My beloved in whom MY SOUL [MY PERSON] is well pleased."

Hebrews 10:38, "But my righteous one shall live by faith and if he shrinks back, MY SOUL [MY PERSON] has no pleasure in him."

There can be no doubt that the Hebrew and Greek words for "soul" have the same basic meaning as our English word "person." There can also be no doubt that God's Divine Person spoke of Himself as a single "Soul" both in the Hebrew and in the Greek Scriptures. For the Divine Soul (Person) of God reproduced a human image of Himself as the visible "image of the invisible God" *(Col. 1:15-"who is the image of the invisible God")* who is "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His Person" *(The context of Heb. 1:3-KJV shows that the Son is the image of the Father's Divine Person)* in His new human manifestation of His existence as "the man Christ Jesus" *(1 Tim. 2:5; Acts 2:22-KJV- "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him")* which began in time *(Psalm 2:7-"You are My son, THIS DAY have I BEGOTTEN YOU" 'Begotten' means "given birth" which is the same Hebrew word used for the births of Cain and Abel in Gen. 4:1-2; See also Heb. 2:17).*

Jesus said in John 5:26 (ESV), "For as the Father has life in himself</s