

WHO ARE THE GENTILES?

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Taken From *Your Heritage*

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Plus Critical Notes

It is unfortunate that most people have so many mistaken ideas about their religion. This is due largely to the many mistranslations of words in the commonly used King James Bible. One of these mistaken ideas is that most of the people of the United States and western Europe, in fact nearly all the Christians in the world, are Gentiles. You hear many of them, even clergymen that should know better say, I'm just a Gentile, saved by grace. I think it is high time that we learned something about one of the most misused words, Gentile.

You may be surprised to know that there is no such word in the Bible, in its original language. Oh yes, I know that you are now riffling through the pages of your King James Bible, looking for some of the many places you will find Gentile in it. However, I said that **there was no such word in the original languages**. The word was put into it by translators, who changed the wording of the Bible centuries after the last book of the Bible was written.

If you are a good Christian, you will surely agree with me that what the prophets originally wrote, in the books that make up our Bible, was inspired by Yahweh. It was correct as the prophets wrote it. But not one of them wrote in English, because no such language existed until many centuries after the prophets lived.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and the New Testament was originally written in the language that Yahshua spoke, Aramaic. This is a Semitic dialect somewhat similar to, but not the same as Hebrew. Aramaic was not generally understood outside of western Asia. So, when Christianity began to spread into southern and southwestern Europe, the New Testament had to be translated into a language which was widely used in Europe.

Greek served this purpose nicely as it was understood by well educated men, over nearly all of Europe, therefore the New Testament was first translated into Greek. Protestant English language translations of the Bible of today, are nearly all translated from the Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament and Greek manuscripts of the New Testament. Let's start at the beginning with the Old Testament.

The word Gentile is not once used in any Hebrew manuscript of the Old Testament. There is a very good reason for this, there is no such word in Hebrew, nor any word that corresponds to it. Everywhere you find the word Gentile used in the Old Testament, it is a mistranslation of the Hebrew word goi, which means nation, the plural form of it is goyim. Since it means nation, why didn't they translate it correctly? Sometimes they did, but for the most part they translated it to fit the official doctrines of

the church of their day. It didn't matter what violence that did to the true meaning of the word.

The church hierarchy had long since determined what its doctrines should be. If the Bible didn't agree with them, so much the worse for the Bible. Men were still being burned at the stake, in those days, for heresy. Heresy meant any religious idea which differed from the official doctrines proclaimed by the bishops. The translators did the best the church would allow them to, let's examine some examples.

In Genesis 12:2 Yahweh said to Abram, "I will make of thee a great nation." In Hebrew Yahweh said, "I will make of thee a great goi." It would have been too silly to translate this, "I will make a Gentile of you", so they correctly translated it nation. In Genesis 25:23 Rebekah was pregnant with the twins Esau and Jacob, while still in her womb, the unborn children were struggling against each other. Rebekah wondered at this, and asked Yahweh what was the meaning of this? Yahweh said to her, "**Two goyim are in thy womb.**"

Certainly Yahweh was not telling her, you are an adulteress, pregnant with two Gentile children, when your husband is not a Gentile. Yahweh said, "**Two nations are in thy womb**", and that is the way it is translated. It is the same word goyim, which elsewhere they generally translate as Gentiles.

Now let's take some examples from the New Testament. Here the word mistranslated Gentile, is nearly always the Greek word **ethnos**. **This means just exactly nation, the same as the Hebrew word goy.**

Luke 7 begins with the incident of a Roman centurion who appealed to Yahshua to heal his servant who was sick and close to dying. The elders of the Jews praised him to Yahshua saying, "He loveth our ethnos and hath built us a synagogue." These Jews would never praise anyone for loving the Gentiles. The centurion would not have built a synagogue for Gentiles. So, to avoid the absurdity, the translators were forced to translate ethnos correctly as nation.

In John 11:50 we find that the Jewish high priest Caiaphas, was plotting with the chief priests and Pharisees, to murder Yahshua. Caiaphas told them, "it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole **ethnos** perish not." Nothing could have pleased this evil [bad-fig]-Jew more than for all the Gentiles to perish, using the word Gentile as we do today. **Therefore the translators had to translate ethnos correctly as nation**, yet in many places, they mistranslate it Gentile.

The Greek word ethnos simply means nation, it has no pagan, non Israel, or even non Greek connotation. The Greeks distinguished between Greeks and all non Greek people, the non Greeks were called Barbarians. All well educated men of that day knew this. The apostle Paul was a very well educated man, who was quite familiar with the Greek language and its idioms. He recognized this distinction between Greek and Barbarian in Romans 1:14 where he said, "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians." Therefore Paul never wrote the word Gentile in any of his epistles.

What does this word Gentile mean and from what is it derived? It is derived from the Latin word **gentilis, which means one who is not a Roman citizen**. If you use the word correctly, then you would have to say that Yahshua and His twelve disciples were all Gentiles. None of them were Roman citizens by birth.

How then is it used at present, when the speaker means to say that someone is non Jewish? About the fourth century A.D., its use was loosely extended to cover more than its original meaning. It was especially applied to those who were heathen or pagan. It became a term for those who were neither Christian nor Jewish. Christians and Jews were generally called just that, Christian or Jew. This was centuries after the last book in the New Testament had been written. The word Gentile was never used by the writer of any book of the Old Testament, because none of them had ever heard of it, as they had never come in contact with Rome.

It was not used by the writer of any book in the New Testament, for there is no such word in the Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek languages. They [the writers of the New Testament books] did not borrow the word from the Latin. If you will look up every place where it is used in the King James Bible, you will see that it is never used in the correct sense, to say that someone is not a Roman citizen. This is the only meaning it had, the only way anybody used it in those days. It was put in by the translators, in an effort to make the Bible say what the translators thought it should have said, therefore it has no authority at all.

Wherever you see the word Gentile in the Bible, remember the correct word is **nation, race or people**. Sometimes it is used when speaking of Israel nations or the Israelite race, as we have seen in the examples I have given you.

In other instances, the context will show that it is being used for a nation which is non Israelite. Only the context in which it is used will show you which meaning to give it. When used of non Israelite people, perhaps Gentile is as good a word as any, for we seem to have no other in general use. Never be deceived by reading the word Gentile in your Bible, for **its only correct meaning is nation or race**.

Critical note by William Finck: **Paul never uttered the silly non-word “gentiles”!** Rather, Paul used only the Greek words τὰ ἔθνη “the nations”, and knew that he was going to those same nations of Genesis 17:6 and 35:11, which nearly every one of his epistles proves in multiple ways.

I call “gentile” a non-word because in our language it is just that, not an English word. Rather, “gentile” was borrowed from the Latin language, and assigned a corrupted meaning, “Non-Jew”, which it never bore in Latin! The English translators chose the Latin gentilis, “gentile”, for their corrupt translation of the original Greek word ἔθνος (ethnos) because Jerome, when he made the Latin Vulgate, used the word gentilis to translate ἔθνος into Latin. Jerome, however, may well have had more wisdom than the later English translators, since gentilis is defined “family, hereditary; tribal; national ... clansman, kinsman” by *The New College Latin & English Dictionary*, and describes a people with some degree of relationship to each other. The *Junior Classic Latin Dictionary* published by Wilcox & Follett Company in 1945 defines gentilis: “of the same clan or race”, surely a word consistent with all scripture (Amos 3:2, Matt. 15:24 et al.) and nothing like the corrupted catholic interpretation of the word! To be honest, ἔθνος must be translated into a like English term when translating the Greek scriptures into English, and no borrowed and corrupted third-language term should be used, especially when that word’s true sense is ignored completely!

Critical note by Clifton A. Emahiser: Evidently Comparet was somewhat influenced by George M. Lamsa's theory, claiming that many of the New Testament books were originally written in Aramaic, and later translated into Greek, and also that Christ and His apostles spoke Aramaic. No doubt Yahshua and his apostles were bilingual and understood Aramaic, but nearly all of the New Testament books were by-and-large originally written in Greek. No doubt later some of these books were translated into the Syraic for some Aramaic speaking people, much the same as Josephus did some of his.