Kingdom Bible Studies



ADULT LEVEL

LESSON 2

WHO'S WHO?

UNDERSTANDING WORD MEANINGS

An accurate understanding of word meanings is essential for interpreting the Scriptures. Much confusion exists within Christendom today due to the lack of accuracy on the part of both translators and Bible students with respect to the meanings and usages of key words. In Lesson 1 we examined several "key" words. We are now ready to look at another misused and misunderstood key word: **Gentile**.

TYPICAL CONFUSED DEFINITION

gen-tile (jen'til; *for adj. 4 & 5, usually* jen'til). *n.* {<Fr. & L.; Fr. *gentil*; L. *gentilis*, of the same gens, clan, or race; also, foreigner, pagan, heathen (non- Jew; non-Christian); 1. any person not a Jew. 2. formerly, among Christians, a heathen; pagan. 3. among Mormons, any person not a Mormon. *adj.* 1. not Jewish. 2. heathen; pagan. 3. not Mormon. 4. of a clan, tribe, people or nation. 5. in *grammar*, designating a nationality or country; *SYN*. see **pagan**.

Webster's New World Dictionary (1966)

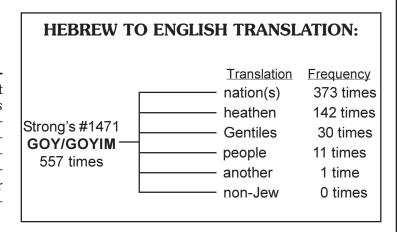
GENTILE

The word **Gentile** means different things to different people. To some, the word means "non-Jew." To others, it means a "Christian." Still others feel it means "heathen" or "non-Christian." They can't all be right. Just what does **Gentile** mean, and is it a real Bible word? What did Paul mean when he said, "... from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles" (Acts 18:6 according to the KJV)?

In this lesson we will examine the meanings and usages of the Hebrew word **goy**, and the Greek words **ethnos** and **Hellen**: the words from which the English word **Gentile(s)** was translated in the King James Version Bible. The proper use of these words will alleviate confusion and equip us to read the Word of God more effectively.

OLD TESTAMENT USAGE

In the *KJV* Old Testament the word **Gentile** is translated from one Hebrew word. That word is **goy** or **goyim** (plural), #1471 in *Strong's Concordance*. The *King James Version* renders this Hebrew word into English in **five** different ways. "Goy/goyim" is found in the Hebrew text 557 times. The different English renderings of this Hebrew word, and the number of times it appears, is illustrated by the diagram at the right.



Inconsistency in translation is partly responsible for the confusion being taught in churches. This discord in translation must be identified and corrected if we are to understand Scripture. Let us now look at a number of Scripture passages that illustrate this orchestrated inconsistency.

Look at the breakdown given in the diagram on page 1. Wh for the Hebrew word goy?		n <i>KJV</i> translation
2. How often was this English word used in the KJV?	times.	
3. How many times was the Hebrew word goy translated into "non-Jew?"		times.
4. Using your Strong's Concordance, where is the first place t	the word Gentiles is u	sed in the King

5. In this verse, the word **Gentiles** is translated from what Hebrew word? _____

James Version? _____

6. In this same verse, the word **nations** is translate from what Hebrew word? _____

Even though the Hebrew **goy** was <u>never</u> translated as "non-Jew" or "non-Israelite," virtually all modern dictionaries define **Gentile** as "non Jew." In Genesis 10.5 (KJV) notice the same Hebrew word was translated into \underline{two} different English words (Gentiles and nations) in the same verse.

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Isaiah 11:10-12.

FIND THE ANSWERS

- 7. In verse 10, the word **Gentiles** is translated from what Hebrew word?
- 8. In verse 12, the word **nations** is translated from what Hebrew word?

Read Hosea 8:8-10.

- 9. In verse 8, the word **Gentiles** is translated from what Hebrew word?
- 10. In verse 10, the word **nations** is translated from what Hebrew word? ______

Read Psalms 9.

- 11. In verses 5, 15, & 19, the word **heathen** is translated from what Hebrew word? _____
- 12. In verses 17 and 20, the word **nations** is translated from what Hebrew word?

Read Ezekiel 12:15-16.

- 13. The word **nations** in verse 15 is translated from what Hebrew word?
- 14. In verse 16, the word **heathen** is translated from what Hebrew word?

Again we see in the above Scripture verses that <u>one Hebrew word</u> in the OT text was rendered into <u>three different English words</u> in the *KJV*. Such inconsistency must be intentional.

FIND THE ANSWERS Read Joel 3. 1. In verse 2, who does God say He will gather? 2. This word is translated from what Hebrew word? 3. In verse 12, who is it that comes to the valley of Jehoshaphat to be judged? 4. This word is translated from what Hebrew word? 5. What are these same people called in verse 9? 6. This word is translated from what Hebrew word? 7. Notice verse 8. The word people is translated from what Hebrew word?

Even though the Hebrew word goy was <u>never</u> translated as "non-Jew," virtually all modern dictionaries define **Gentile** this way. In Genesis 10:5, notice the same Hebrew word was inconsistently translated into \underline{two} different English words in the same verse. The Hebrew word goy/goyim appears \underline{seven} times in the third chapter of Joel and is translated into \underline{four} different English words.

The preceding Scripture passages are good examples of the variety of ways the translators rendered the Hebrew word **goy**. Sometimes they used the word **Gentiles** while at other times they used the word **nation(s)**, **heathen**, or **people**. Go back to each Scripture cite and try substituting the words **Gentile** or **non-Jew** each time and see what happens. The words **Gentiles** and **heathen** do not provide the consistency and accuracy that the word **nation(s)** does. <u>Every</u> place the Hebrew word **goy** was used, the English word **nation(s)** could have been used, thus eliminating confusion. You may want to change this word in your *King James Bible*, thus making it more accurate.

An even better example of the problem with using the words **goy**, **nation**, **Gentile**, and **heathen** to translate **goy** is in the 25th chapter of Genesis.

FIND THE ANSWERS	
Read Genesis 25:19-26. 8. In verse 23 we read: "Two	are in thy womb."
9. This word is translated from what Hebrew word?	
10. Try substituting Gentiles or heathen in verse 23. Do yo Gentiles are synonymous? Yes No	u think nations , heathen, and

In this example the translators elected to use the correct word **nations** for obvious reasons. If they had rendered it **Gentiles**, then these two unborn **goyim** (Jacob and Esau), twin grandsons of Abraham and sons of Isaac, would have been called two <u>Gentiles</u> in the womb of Rebekah, the mother of Israel: A sensational paradox for anyone who holds that Gentiles cannot be Hebrews. **Heathen** would have been an equally absurd translation.

A few additional examples follow of how inappropriate the use of **Gentiles** or **heathen** would have been in translating the Hebrew word **goy**.

FIND THE ANSWERS
Read Genesis 12:1-3. 1. In verse 2, the word nation is translated from what Hebrew word?
2. Would it have made any sense for God to bless Abram (Abraham) by making him a great gentile or a great heathen? (Note: See also Genesis 17:1-7.)
Read Genesis 46:1-3. 3. In verse 3, the word nation is translated from what Hebrew word?
4. Would it be logical for God to make Israel a great gentile or heathen ?
Read Exodus 19:1-6. 5. In verse 6, the word nation is translated from what Hebrew word?
6. Is there any way that God would have told Israel that He would make her a holy gentile or heathen?
The lexicon defines "goy" as: "A people." It also notes that "The word is general, and used of the nations at large, also of the Israelites." Thus, the Hebrew word goy or goyim means "nation(s)" or "people" and can refer to Israelite or non-Israelite nations. Goy does not specify race. Goy can mean any race or races. When comparing this with the <i>Strong's Concordance</i> definition of goy (#1471): "a foreign nation; hence, a Gentile," a discrepancy is apparent. We have already examined examples which show that goy does not indicate a foreign nation; thus, the <i>Strong's</i> definition is misleading. Goy can mean a foreign nation, but many times it refers to the nation of Israel. The context within which the word goy is used will determine what nations or people are meant. With this thought in mind, answer the following questions.
FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Genesis 10:1-5.

7. In verse 5 the word **nations** (goy) refers to descendants of which of Noah's sons?

Read Genesis 10:20.

8. The word **nations** (goy) refers to descendants of which of Noah's sons?

Read Genesis 10:31.

9. The word **nations** (goy) refers to descendants of which of Noah's sons?

(Note: In these three examples we see the Hebrew word **goy** used to refer to <u>three separate</u> branches of people, two of which are non-Semitic [not from Shem] and never became Israelites.)

FIND THE ANSWERS

Read Genesis 17:4-6.

1. Here the Hebrew word **goy** is translated as **nations** three different times. In this instance, what family does **nations** refer to?

Read Genesis 17:20.

2. Here the word **nation** (goy) refers to what people? ______(Note: None of these people were Israelites.)

Read Genesis 25:23-26.

3. What two **nations** (goy) are referred to? _____ and ____

Read Genesis 35:10.

4. The **nation** (goy) and company of **nations** (goyim) refers to what group of people? ______(Note: In this case **goy/goyim** refers specifically to Israelites only.)

In summary, the Hebrew word goy/goyim as used in the <u>Old Testament</u> simply means "nation(s)" or "people(s)." We have seen from a number of Scripture examples that the term can refer to Israelites, non-Israelites, or both. We have also examined a number of examples illustrating the inconsistency in the KJV translation of this Hebrew word, causing confusion and misunderstanding. The English word **Gentile(s)** as taught in churches is misleading. Hundreds of years ago the word **Gentile** was understood differently, but in modern times it is used to mean "non-Jew." Later in this lesson, we will examine the origin and ancient meaning of the word **Gentile**. But first, we will look at the <u>New Testament usage</u> of the Greek words from which **Gentile(s)** is translated.

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

In the <u>New Testament</u>, the word **Gentile** is translated from <u>two</u> Greek words (**ethnos** and **Hellen**), and these are rendered into English in <u>five</u> different ways. The chart to the right illustrates the various renderings along with their frequency of use. We will examine these two Greek words individually.

ETHNOS

In *Strong's Concordance*, the word **ethnos** (#1484) is defined as "... a race; i.e., a tribe ..." yet not once did the *KJV* translators use **race** or **tribe**. The word **Gentile** is not in this definition, yet that is the word the translators used most often.

(Note: In the 21st Century Edition of Strongs Concordance the publishers changed this entry to add "Gentile" to the definition. As we note throughout these studies, translations and dictionary/lexicon entries are often changed to fit popular usages.)

GREEK TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION: <u>Translation</u> <u>Frequency</u> -Gentile(s) 93 times - nation(s) 64 times Strong's #1484 ETHNOS heathen 5 times 164 times 2 times -people non-Jew 0 times Strong's #1672 ----- Greek(s) 20 times Gentile(s) HELLEN 7 times 27 times

FIND THE ANSWERS
1. Find the first two definitions for "ethnos" (#1484) in Strong's Concordance:,
2. How many times did the KJV translators use these terms when translating ethnos ?
3. What is the most common word used by the translators for ethnos (#1484)?
4. Does this word appear anywhere in <i>Strong's</i> <u>definition</u> of ethnos ? Yes No

Considering the preceding facts, why did the translators use the word **Gentile(s)** most often when translating the Greek word **ethnos**? We will address that question in a moment. First, let's examine the use of the word **ethnos** in the New Testament. As was the case with the Hebrew word **goy**, the *KJV* translators were inconsistent in translating the Greek word **ethnos**. Let's look at some examples.

Read Luke 21:24. 5. The word nations is translated from what Greek word? _______ 6. In the same verse, the word Gentiles is translated from what Greek word? ______ Read Romans 10:19. 7. The word people is translated from what Greek word? ______ 8. In the same verse, the word nation is translated from what Greek word? ______ (Note: This verse shows that the Greek word ethnos was not translated honestly. Here Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 32:21. Nation is the correct translation for both the Greek ethnos and the Hebrew goy.) Read Galatians 2:8-9. 9. The word Gentiles is translated from what Greek word? ______ (Note: From the context it is obvious the same group of people is being referred to, yet we see two different English words used in the KJV translation.)

In light of the above verses, translation inconsistency is obvious as we see <u>four</u> different English words rendered from the same Greek word without any apparent logical reason. As was the case for the Hebrew word **goy**, the English word **nation(s)** would be the consistently accurate translation for the Greek word **ethnos**. The word **Gentile(s)**, with its modern-day meaning of "non-Jew," simply is not an accurate translation. Let's consider a few Scripture passages to illustrate this point.

FIND THE ANSWERS
Read Luke 23:2. 1. Would it make any sense that the Judean leaders would bring Jesus before Pilate and accuse Him of perverting the Gentile? Yes No (Note: The so-called "Jews" would not have cared if some non-Jews were being perverted.)
Read John 11:48. 2. Would it be logical that the chief priests and Pharisees would be fearful that the Romans would take away their "Gentile"? Yes No
Read Acts 2:5. 3. Would it be accurate to replace nation with Gentile? Yes No (Note: So-called "Jews" would be outraged with the thought that their ancestors came out of "many Gentiles under heaven.")
Read Acts 10:22. 4. Would it have made sense to say that Cornelius was "of good report among all the Gentile of the Jews (Judeans)"? Yes No
As in the case of the Hebrew word goy , the Greek word ethnos also has general applicability; it can refer to any group of people determined by the <u>context</u> . To say that ethnos always refers to the same group of people just isn't accurate or honest. The following scriptural examples will illustrate this point.
FIND THE ANSWERS
Read Luke 7:5. 5. What nation (ethnos) is referred to? (Note: This event took place in the city of Capernaum by the Sea of Galilee.)
Read John 11:48. 6. What nation (ethnos) were the chief priests and Pharisees afraid to lose?
Read Acts 4:27. 7. The people of Israel are mentioned as well as other people. What name is given to these others?
Read Acts 13:19. 8. What seven nations (ethnos) are referred to? (See Deuteronomy 7:1.)
Read Revelation 15:4. 9. Nation(s) (ethnos) is a reference to what kinds of people?

GREEK TO ENGLISH TRANSLATION: Strong's #1672 HELLEN 27 times Translation Frequency Greek(s) 20 times 7 times

HELLEN

Strong's Concordance defines this word (#1627) as follows: "a Hellen (Grecian) or inhabitant of Hellen (Greece); a Greekspeaking person."

HELLEN

Now we will turn our attention to the second Greek word that was rendered **Gentile** in the *KJV* New Testament: **Hellen**. Looking at the chart above, we can see that this Greek word was used 27 times in the New Testament, and was rendered **Greek(s)** 20 times and **Gentile(s)** 7 times. As was the case with the Greek word **ethnos**, the word **Hellen** was translated inconsistently. A look at several Scriptures will illustrate this point.

FIND THE ANSWERS	
1. According to Strong's the Greek word Hellen refers to what nation?	
2. Romans 1:16 contains the phrase " the Jew (Judean) first, and also the	"
3. This word is translated from what Greek word? (Note: Paul is distinguishing between the nations of Judea and Greece.)	-
4. In Romans 2:9-10 both verses contain the phrase, " to the Jew (Judean) first, and also the"	
5. In both verses "Gentile" is translated from what Greek word? (Note: Again, Paul is distinguishing between the nations of Judea and Greece.)	
Note: In the above three verses, the <u>same phrase</u> is used containing the Greek word Hellen . However in the first case the translators used the English word Greek , while in the other two verses they used the word Gentile .	

As you can see from the above verses, the English words **Gentile** and **Greek** were both translated from the same Greek word: **Hellen**. Research the other times **Hellen** (#1672) was translated "Gentile," and you will see that the translators should have always rendered it **Greek** instead of deceptively substituting the English word **Gentile**. This apparent inconsistency in translation is the kind of thing that causes confusion in readers' minds. Verses like these are used by some people to suggest that "Jews" have special favor in God's eyes, while "Gentiles" (so-called non-Jews and Christians) are somehow lessor. This is faulty reasoning and faulty translating!

We have seen that the Greek word **ethnos** means <u>any group, race, or nation of people who share a common link</u>. The word **ethnos** should have been translated **nation** rather than "Gentile." Also, the Greek word **Hellen** means "Greek" and should have been thus translated instead of "Gentile." Consistency in translation would have prevented confusion.

Let us now examine the origin and intended use of the English word Gentile.

The Lexicon defines **ethnos** (#1484) as follows: "1. a multitude associated or living together. 2. a multitude of individuals of the same nature or genus. 3. race, nation."

Webster's New World Dictionary, under the word "Gentile," shows that the Latin root word **gentilis** means: "of the same gens, clan, or race."

The same dictionary states the following under the words **gens** and **genus**: "This is also the basis for the word 'genesis' which means "the coming into being of something; an origin."

gens: "originally, that belonging together by birth or descent."

genus: "birth, origin, race, species, kind, class."

ORIGIN AND INTENT OF "GENTILE"

The English word **Gentile** originates, not from Hebrew or Greek (i.e., not from the Bible text), but from the Roman Latin word **gentilis**. Comparing the meanings given in the box at the left, notice the close similarity between the Latin word **gentilis** and the Greek word **ethnos**. Both words refer to a group or groups of people. That could be a family, a group of related families, a tribe or an entire nation. (Note the meanings of the words **gens** and **genus** are also the basis for "Genesis" meaning "a common beginning").

The words **ethnos** and **gentilis** themselves denote no one <u>particular</u> group of people. They can refer to <u>any</u> group or groups in general. The <u>context</u> in which these words are used indicate which particular group.

The original meaning of the English word **Gentile**, or its Latin root **gentilis**, are approximately the same. In this respect, the Old English word **Gentile** would have been comparable with the Greek word **ethnos** or the Hebrew word **goy**. In any case, the *KJV* translators, back in the 1600s, translated these words very inconsistently.

When one considers the <u>modern</u> concept of the word **Gentile**, it becomes obvious that a definite change has taken place in dictionary definitions. To say that **Gentile** means "non-Jew" (which is the predominant usage today) violates the <u>original</u> meaning and intent of the word and its root. There is absolutely no honest way to apply this modern usage of "non-Jew" to the Greek word **ethnos** or the Hebrew word **goy**. Doing so has caused a great amount of confusion and misunderstanding.

MODERN "CHURCH" USAGE OF GENTILE

Most churches today consider a **Gentile** to be "any person who is not a Jew." Ministers are taught this error at the seminaries, and they pass it on to their church members through sermons, Bible studies, and church classes. Additionally, countless numbers of films, books, tracts, and articles espouse this erroneous position. The modern concept of "Gentile" is neither the Latin "Gentilis" nor the "ethnos" of the Greek Scriptures.

CONCLUSION

So far in this lesson we have examined the meanings and usages of the English word **Gentile(s)** by researching the Hebrew word **goy/goyim** from which it was translated in the *KJV* Old Testament. We have seen that **Gentile(s)** was only one of several words that were used to translate the same Hebrew word. The same inconsistency is in the *KJV* New Testament with the Greek words **ethnos** and **Hellen**.

Also, the modern definition of the word **Gentile** has changed, and it has changed people's concept of God, race, and theology. It has corrupted their understanding of history and Scripture. Churchgoers today are taught error and deception. They've been taught that the people of the world are divided into two exclusive racial categories: 1. Jews and 2. Gentiles. There is not one shred of evidence in the Holy Bible to support that myth. It is a lie: a false teaching by which churches have confused English-speaking Christians for centuries. If you've been taught that you are a "Gentile" and therefore a "non-Hebrew," you too have been deceived. Strangely enough, most real Christians are racial Hebrews and Israelites. But most so-called "Jews" are neither Hebrews, Semites, nor Israelites. More about this later.

Now that we have seen that the Greek word **ethnos** means "nation(s)" or "people(s)" and should have been translated accordingly, we can turn our attention to what Paul meant in Acts 18:6 when he said, "... from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles (ethnos; i.e., nations)." Just who were these <u>nations/people</u> to whom Paul was referring?

Applying the erroneous modern-day interpretation of the word "Gentiles" (i.e., non-Israelites) to what Paul said would lead one to believe Paul was, from that moment on, going to preach the Gospel to non-Israelites only. With this kind of false teaching it is no wonder that most professing Christians today believe the myth that so-called "Jews" are Israelites, and Christians are non-Israelites.

Also, what did Jesus mean in Acts 9:15 when He said that Paul was "... a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the nations ..."? And when Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ...," who did He refer to as nations?

In the next lesson, we will examine who these people were to whom Paul and the disciples were sent to preach the Gospel. We will also discover how these people can be recognized today.

To neutralize Christians, our enemies only need to twist the meanings of key words in the Bibles we read. The prudent Bible student will carefully research and examine these words, especially when establishing doctrine. That is exactly what these lessons are designed to help you do. (2 Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing (discerning) the word of truth."

NOTES

Kingdom Bible Studies



ANSWER KEY

LESSON 2

WHO'S WHO?

Page 12

- 1. Nation(s)
- 2. 373 times out of 557 occurrences (67% of the time)
- 3. Never
- 4. Genesis 10:5
- 5. Goy/govim (#1471)
- 6. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 7. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 8. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 9. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 10. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 11. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 12. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 13. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 14. Goy/goyim (#1471)

Page 13

- 1. Nations
- 2. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 3. Heathen
- 4. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 5. Gentiles
- 6. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 7. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 8. Natons
- 9. Goy/goyim (#1471)
- 10. No.

Page 14

- 1. Goy (#1471)
- 2. Of course not

Page 14 (continued)

- 3. Goy (#1471)
- 4. Of course not
- 5. Goy (#1471)
- 6. Of course not
- 7. Descendants of Japheth
- 8. Descendants of Ham
- 9. Descendants of Shem

Page 15

- 1. Descendants of Abraham
- 2. Descendants of Ishmael
- 3. Descendants of Esau (Edomites) and descendants of Jacob (Israel)
- 4. Descendants of Jacob (Israelites)

Page 16

- 1. A race, A tribe
- 2. Never
- 3. Gentile(s) 93 times out of 164 occurrences, or 57% of the time.
- 4. No
- 5. Ethnos (#1484)
- 6. Ethnos (#1484)
- 7. Ethnos (#1484)
- 8. Ethnos (#1484)
- 9. Ethnos (#1484)
- 10. Ethnos (#1484)

Page 17

- 1. No
- 2. No
- 3. No
- 4. No
- 5. Galilee
- 6. Judea
- 7. Gentile (ethnos)
- 8. The Hittites, Gergasites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and the Jebusites (all of these were non-Israelite nations)
- 9. All Christian people

Page 17 (continued)

Note: The Scriptures in questions 5 and 6 show that the Greek word **ethnos** (usually translated "Gentile") was used to refer to two separate <u>Israelite</u> nations (Galilee and Judea). The Scriptures in questions 7 and 8 use **ethnos** to refer to <u>non-Israelite</u> nations, while the scripture in question 9 uses **ethnos** to mean all kinds of peoples (including Israelites).

Page 18

- 1. Greece
- 2. Greek
- 3. Hellen (#1672)
- 4. Gentile
- 5. Hellen (#1672)

NOTES