

What About “the Gentiles”?

by J.K. McKee posted 03 February, 2002 www.tnnonline.net

A concept that is very popular in today's Messianic Jewish movement is that “Jew and Gentile are one in Messiah.” This would mean that **any person**, regardless of his or her physical bloodline, is equal in the eyes of God and should be equal in the eyes of one another because of faith in Yeshua. For many of our Messianic Jewish brethren, this is exactly what the message of the Apostles is all about: Jew and Gentile becoming one in Messiah. For many of our Christian brothers, in slight contrast, it can be all about Jew and Gentile becoming one in Messiah as part of “the Church,” a group separated from Israel.

Challenging a few of the claims of modern Christianity and Messianic Judaism can cause some serious problems, because today in the Messianic community there are many non-Jewish Believers who consider themselves a part of the Commonwealth of Israel, and *equal partakers* in Israel's promises along with Jewish Believers. This causes some problems because in most of Messianic Judaism, non-Jewish Believers or “Gentiles” in their terminology, often must function in Messianic Jewish congregations as “second class” to the Jewish congregants, so that the “Gentile” congregants can only become familiar with their “Jewish Roots.” In Christianity, which has few Jewish members, virtually all church members are “Gentiles” and they feel they do not have to observe so-called “Jewish rituals” (which are in actuality Biblical practices) such as the seventh-day Sabbath, the Biblical holidays of Leviticus 23, or the dietary commandments.

Those of us who believe in the end-time restoration of all Israel offer a third viable alternative. First, we believe that God has only one assembly of elect, Israel, as opposed to Israel and “the Church.” Since all followers of the God of Israel are considered to be a part of Israel, this removes any “second class” status that may officially or unofficially exist in some assemblies and human organizations. Second, this Israel is composed of the Two Houses of Israel, Judah and scattered Israel/Ephraim, which according to Biblical prophecy will be reunified prior to the Messiah's return (Isaiah 11:12-16; Jeremiah 10:6-10; Ezekiel 37:15-28; Zechariah 10:6-10).

What is the Issue?

There is a whole host of reasons as to why the reunification of all Israel is controversial. It is controversial to many in Messianic Judaism because it advocates that all Believers are a part of the community of Israel, and that non-Jewish Believers are not “second class citizens” to Jewish Believers. It makes *everyone* free and equal citizens of Israel, regardless of birth. It is controversial to Christianity because Israel is called to follow God's Torah, and a substantial amount of Christian theology is based on the false premise that the Messiah came to abolish the Law.

However, the premise that all Believers are somehow a part of Israel is not really what is controversial for some. Many Christians will readily admit that their faith is inextricably tied to “Israel,” whatever Israel is. Rather, for those who are just hearing about the message of all Israel, meaning Judah and Ephraim coming together, the issue concerns who a third group of people is—**the Gentiles**—meaning those not physically related to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. How are they involved in this reunification process?

Some non-Jews who are involved with Messianic Judaism perceive the Two-House message of Judah and Ephraim as being quite exclusive. They see it as such because it is taught that Judah and Ephraim are coming together as one in the Messiah. What they have been taught, however, is that it is all about Jew and Gentile being one in Messiah. So naturally, they ask the following questions: “*What about the Gentiles? What do you do about Gentiles in this coming together of the Two Houses of Israel? If there is no place for the Gentiles then you are preaching falsehoods.*”

Obviously, because of the inherent hostility of Messianic Judaism toward the Two-House teaching at present, non-Jewish Believers in Messianic Judaism do not readily think about the possibility of themselves being involved in the restoration of all Israel as the prophecies tell us. They perceive themselves as only being “Gentiles,” complete and total foreigners to Israel, often in no way related or connected to the Jewish people. They believe that because the Two-House teaching advocates a chosen people of Israel composed of Judah and Ephraim that this teaching

somehow withholds salvation to “Gentiles.” But is this what is really being advocated? Is the message of Israel’s restoration actually one of racially-based salvation?

We must properly answer the question: “What about the Gentiles?”

Goy & Ethnos

The first thing we must do for a proper examination of the issues at hand is have appropriate definitions of the Hebrew word *goy* and Greek word *ethnos*, knowing what they mean in their original contexts.

The common Hebrew word that is understood to mean “Gentile” is *goy* (גוי). Its plural form and more common usage is *goyim* (גוים). HALOT indicates that it relates to “people...whole population of a territory; גַּם [am] rather stresses the blood relationship,” “nation,” “often the pagan peoples as opposed to Israel...the ‘heathen,’” “people=persons.” BDB tells us that *goy* means “nation, people,” “spec. of descendants of Abraham,” “definitely of Israel.”¹

It is important that we grasp this wide array of usages for *goy/goyim*, because it is applied to the people of Israel every bit as much as it is to others. In Exodus 19:6, God commanded the people of Israel at Mount Sinai “you will be a kingdom of *cohanim* [priests] for me, a nation set apart” (CJB). Ancient Israel was to be a *goy qadosh* (גוי קדוש) or “holy *goy*.” Only in a few instances will modern Bibles’ translation of the Tanach or Old Testament actually render *goy/goyim* as “Gentile(s).” In fact, “Gentile” appears only once in the NASU Old Testament in Isaiah 9:1:

“But there will be no *more* gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side of Jordan, **Galilee of the Gentiles.**”

The Orthodox Jewish ArtScroll Tanach, in contrast, has “beyond the Jordan, **the region of the nations,**” and NJPS reads with “the other side of the Jordan, and **Galilee of the Nations.**” I point out these two translations to make an important point. *Goy/goyim* in the Tanach, in its most neutral sense, means “nation(s)” as opposed to “Gentile(s).” This is confirmed by the rendering of *Galil ha’goyim* (גליל הגוים) as “Galilee of the nations.”

But what of the Apostolic Scriptures? The Greek equivalent term for *goy/goyim* is *ethnos* (ἔθνος), and it is used fairly consistently in the Septuagint (LXX) to translate *goy/goyim*. When Israel is called in the Hebrew to be a *goy qadosh* in Exodus 19:6, in the Greek it reads *ethnos hagion* (ἔθνος ἅγιον). LS offers us with a variety of definitions concerning its ancient Greek and Biblical Greek usages, including: “a number of people accustomed to live together, a company, body of men,” “a nation, people,” “the nations, Gentiles, i.e. all but Jews and Christians.”³ TDNT indicates that it can mean “‘mass,’ ‘multitude,’ ‘host,’ and may be used for a ‘herd’ or ‘swarm’ as well as a human group.”⁴

It is at this point where we reach an impasse. What is the correct meaning of *ethnos*? It is “Gentile(s)” or is it “nation(s)”?

The Hebrew *goy/goyim*, on the whole, have been consistently rendered as “nation(s)” throughout most modern Jewish and Christian translations of the Tanach or Old Testament. For consistency, would it not be appropriate to do so in the Apostolic Scriptures or New Testament for the Greek word *ethnos*? Should not *ethnos* be rendered as “nation(s)” as well?

Unfortunately this has not been the case, perhaps for pre-conceived doctrinal reasons, and *ethnos* in most New Testament translations has been rendered as “Gentile(s).” In most translations of the New Testament it has not been rendered as “nation(s).” This is not to say that there are no

¹ Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, eds., *The Hebrew & Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2001), 1:183.

² Francis Brown, S.R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 156.

³ H.G. Lidell and R. Scott, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 226.

⁴ K.L. Schmidt, “*ethnos*,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, abrid. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), 201.

usages of *ethnos* referring to “Gentiles” or those not physically related to Israel, but your standard Bible reader is often unaware of the fact that the underlying vocabulary, *ethnos* means “nation(s).”

There are, of course, exceptions to this. Two Bible versions that properly render *ethnos* as “nation(s)” are Young’s Literal Translation and the Literal Translation of the Holy Bible by Jay P. Green. To demonstrate this point, compare the various translations of Matthew 4:15, where Yeshua quotes Isaiah 9:1:

“[T]HE LAND OF ZEBULUN AND THE LAND OF NAPHTALI, BY THE WAY OF THE SEA, BEYOND THE JORDAN, GALILEE OF THE GENTILES” (Matthew 4:15, NASU).

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, **Galilee of the nations!**” (Matthew 4:15, YLT).

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, way of *the* sea, beyond the Jordan, **Galilee of the nations**” (Matthew 4:15, LITV).

Each of these translations has a distinct rendering for *Galilaea tōn ethnōn* (Γαλιλαία τῶν ἐθνῶν), which is, not surprisingly, the same Greek that appears in the LXX Isaiah 9:1 rendering of “Galilee of the nations.”

What is the most appropriate rendering for *tōn ethnōn* (genitive case, denoting possession) in this passage? Is it “nations” or “Gentiles”? Which connotes a rendering to let interpreters decide for themselves if *goy/goyim* and *ethnos* are talking about a neutral “nations” or pagan “Gentiles”? It should be clear that in its most neutral context that “nations” is best.

The English term “Gentile” is derived the Latin word *gentilis*. In Latin, *gentilis* means “family, hereditary; national,”⁵ similar to the Hebrew *goy/goyim* and the Greek *ethnos*. This is confirmed by the Latin Vulgate translation which renders *goy qodesh* in Exodus 19:6 as *gens sancta* and *Galil ha’goyim* in Isaiah 9:1 as *Galileae gentim*. *Galileae gentium* is also used in the Vulgate’s translation of Matthew 4:15 for *Galilaea tōn ethnōn*. Like both *goy/goyim* and *ethnos*, *gentilis* and its English derivative “Gentile” too, can mean “nation(s).”

While among many Christians today, the term “Gentile” is simply a term to refer to a person who is not Jewish, meaning one of “the nations,” the ancient understanding of being a “Gentile” was anything but positive. *ISBE* indicates that “The general tendency...was one of increasing hostility toward the Gentiles. They and their countries were considered unclean.”⁶ In the Jewish understanding, the term “Gentile” is not one that is positive. *EJ* notes, “the low moral, social, and ethical standards of the surrounding gentiles were continuously emphasized, and social contact with them was regarded as being a pernicious social and moral influence. As a result, during this period the world was regarded as divided, insofar as peoples were concerned, into the Jewish people and the ‘nations of the world,’ and insofar as individuals were concerned, into ‘the Jew’ and the idolater.”⁷ This indicates that the term “Gentile” is often synonymous with being an idolater or a pagan. These same meanings pass into much of Judaism today. Do they likewise fall into Messianic Judaism?

What understanding of “Gentile” should be most appropriate? Is it just another alternative term to refer to one of the “nations,” or is it a term synonymous with a pagan idolater?

In its most neutral form, the Greek word *ethnos* that is most often rendered as “Gentile(s)” in English versions of the New Testament, should be understood as meaning “nation(s).” Few people reading their Bibles are aware of this.

“Gentile” Can be an Offensive Term

When non-Jewish Believers know some of the theological background behind the term “Gentile,” it often does not make them very happy when it is used to define them, **as in Judaism it**

⁵ *HarperCollins Latin Concise Dictionary* (Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1997), 94.

⁶ A. van Selms, “Gentile,” in Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., et. al., *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 2:444.

⁷ Editorial Staff, “Gentile,” in *Encyclopaedia Judaica. MS Windows 9x*. Brooklyn: Judaica Multimedia (Israel) Ltd, 1997.

is often synonymous with an idolatrous pagan. In fact, knowing that “Gentile” means “pagan” in many respects can be offensive to more than a few. What is to be done about this?

By saying that he is the “apostle of Gentiles,” the Apostle Paul is really saying that he is the “apostle of nations,” meaning the masses of humanity:

“For I speak to you, the nations, since I am an apostle of the nations⁸, (I glorify my ministry)” (Romans 11:13, LITV).

But even though the term *ethnos* properly means “nation(s),” why do so many non-Jewish Believers assert that they are “Gentiles”? Are they (unknowingly) claiming themselves to (actually) be pagans?

In Christianity, part of asserting oneself to be a Gentile is because many non-Jewish Believers want to separate themselves from Israel. Sadly, this desire for separation can be birthed in many cases out of anti-Semitism. Another reason may be because “Gentile Christianity” has largely separated itself from the Biblical practices of the Apostles and early Believers in Yeshua, and rejects by-and-large, the continued validity of the Torah or Law of Moses. In these circles, being called a “Gentile Christian” is what separates a person from being connected to Israel. But the truth of the matter is that if a person readily calls himself or herself a “Gentile Christian,” the person is really calling himself or herself a “*Pagan* Christian,” one who would be an idolater and a follower of the Messiah, which is a complete and total contradiction of what a true Believer should be.

For non-Jews in Messianic Judaism, being called “Gentile” often comes out of an ignorance of knowing the Jewish usage of the term. When non-believing Jews refer to those outside their community as “Gentiles,” it is not in the most positive of ways. Being referred to as “Gentiles” in the Messianic Jewish movement can likewise be suspect, when the neutral term “non-Jew” would be more appropriate. It is compounded when such non-Jewish Believers are often not welcomed within Messianic Judaism.

The Promises That Were Made

Are there any solutions to getting beyond the “Gentile” issue? Yes, there are. Let us examine the eternal promises that God made concerning the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

“Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying, ‘As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you will be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I will make you the father of a **multitude of nations**. I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you. I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you” (Genesis 17:3-7).

This critical text says that Abraham will become the father of a *hamon goyim* (הַמְּגוֹן גוֹיִם) or a “multitude of nations.” Other Bible translations may render this Hebrew phrase as “many nations.” The Septuagint translates this into Greek as *plēthous ethnōn* (πλήθους ἐθνῶν) and the Latin Vulgate has *multarum gentium*. In other words, it would not be inappropriate to say that from the seed of Abraham would come *multitudes of “Gentiles,”* although “nations” would be a far better understanding. A similar promise is likewise given by God to Jacob:

“Then God appeared to Jacob again when he came from Paddan-aram, and He blessed him. God said to him, ‘Your name is Jacob; you shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel shall be your name. Thus He called him Israel.’ God also said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; be fruitful and multiply; **a nation and a company of nations** shall come from you, and kings shall come forth from you. The land which I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give it to you, and I will give the land to your descendants after you” (Genesis 35:9-12).

⁸ Grk. *eimi egō ethnōn apostolos* (εἰμι ἐγὼ ἐθνῶν ἀπόστολος).

In this promise the Lord told Jacob/Israel that a *goy u'qahal goyim* (גוי וקהל גוים) would come forth from him. This Hebrew phrase is translated variably in multiple Bibles. ATS has “a nation and a congregation of nations.” The NIV has “a nation and a community of nations.” YLT has “a nation and assembly of nations.” And, NJPS has “a nation, yea an assembly of nations.”

The LXX rendering of the Hebrew is *ethnē kai sunagōgai ethnōn* (ἔθνη καὶ συναγωγὰὶ ἐθνῶν). Brenton’s English translation of the LXX has “nations and gatherings of nations.” The Latin Vulgate translated the Hebrew as *gentes et populi nationum*, which may be understood as “Gentiles and a population of nations.”

When we examine this promise that the Lord made to Jacob in Hebrew, and its subsequent translations in both the Greek and the Latin which have *both* affected theologians’ opinions over the centuries, it becomes quite apparent that the promise of Israel’s seed to be numerous has been underrated. Indeed, Jacob was promised that from his loins would come multitudes of “Gentiles,” *nations*. Or, as the Septuagint Greek would imply, multiple gatherings of *ethnic groups*.

This promise is then passed down from Jacob to Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph who was viceroy of Egypt. We know that later Ephraim’s name would become a designation for the Northern Kingdom of Israel:

“When Joseph saw that his father laid his right hand on Ephraim's head, it displeased him; and he grasped his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. Joseph said to his father, ‘Not so, my father, for this one is the firstborn. Place your right hand on his head.’ But his father refused and said, ‘I know, my son, I know; he also will become a people and he also will be great. However, his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become **a multitude of nations**’” (Genesis 48:17-19).

Ephraim’s descendants were promised to become a *melo ha'goyim* (מְלֵאֲתֵּי גוֹיִם), “a multitude of nations.” The NIV has “a group of nations.” YLT has “the fulness of the nations.” ATS has “his off-spring will fill the nations,” and NJPS has “his offspring shall be plentiful enough for nations.”

The LXX translates *melo ha'goyim* as *plēthos ethnōn* (πλήθος ἐθνῶν), translated by Brenton as “a multitude of nations,” but it could also be understood as a multitude of *ethnicities*. The Latin Vulgate has *crescet in gentes, gentes* speaking of “Gentiles.”

The Hebrew, Greek, and Latin renderings all tell us that the promise given to Ephraim is speaking of physical “descendants.” This is reflected by the underlying Hebrew and Greek words used in the Bible. The Hebrew word *zera* (זֶרַע) has a variety of meanings, including “sowing, seed, descendants, offspring, children, and posterity” (AMG).⁹ Its equivalent in the Greek Septuagint and in the Messianic Scriptures is *sperma* (σπέρμα), and the Latin Vulgate uses the word *semen*.

Jacob prophesied that Ephraim’s physical descendants would be multiple gatherings of ethnicities or “Gentiles.” By extension, the Northern Kingdom Israelites who lost their Israelite heritage because of idolatry, would proliferate and reproduce great numbers of descendants among the nations. When Messianic Jews speak of “Gentiles,” to whom are they referring? Are they referring to the scattered Israelites who are part of the multitudes of “Gentiles” that scattered Israel/Ephraim’s seed was prophesied to become? Or, are they referring to those who have no connection to Israel at all?

Given the evidence concerning the term “Gentile(s),” perhaps we need to reconsider its usage. In actuality when the term “nation(s)” is used in Scripture, it could be referring to those people that scattered Israel’s seed was prophesied to become, or at least where such people were scattered.

⁹ Warren Baker and Eugene Carpenter, eds., *Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 2003), 304.

Salvation to the Nations?

With a proper understanding of the people groupings most consider to be “Gentiles,” we can now see a fuller context of Romans 11:13:

“But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry.”

When reading Romans 11:1-10, the Apostle Paul very clearly speaks of his testimony of being a Jewish Believer in Messiah Yeshua and the fact that the remnant of Israel, the Jewish people (implied in the context of the chapter), have in many ways rejected Him as Savior. He says in v. 11, “I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation *has come* to the Gentiles, to make them jealous.”

But who are these “Gentiles”? Or, as he would say if *ethnos* were rendered as “nations,” “But by their slipping away came salvation **to the nations**, to provoke them to jealousy” (LITV).

Salvation to the nations? What “nations” would these be? Obviously, they would be anyone outside of the Jewish nation. But, could these “nations” also be an indirect reference to where scattered Israel is to be found? God said the Northern Kingdom of Israel/Ephraim would be scattered among the nations. Amos prophesied, “I will shake the house of Israel **among all nations**¹⁰ as *grain* is shaken in a sieve, but not a kernel will fall to the ground” (9:9). I believe that this factor cannot be ignored. Consider what Paul further says in Romans 11:25:

“For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery, lest you be wise in your own estimation, that a partial hardening has happened to Israel **until the fulness of the Gentiles has come in.**”

The “fulness of the Gentiles” in this Scripture in Greek is *to plērōma tōn ethnōn* (τὸ πλήρωμα τῶν ἐθνῶν). It reads very similarly to the LXX in Genesis 48:19, which reads *plēthos ethnōn* (πλήθος ἐθνῶν) for the Hebrew *melo ha'goyim*. In modern Hebrew translations of the New Testament, *to plērōma tōn ethnōn*, interestingly enough, reads with *melo ha'goyim* (UBSHNT).¹¹ The Greek *plērōma* is slightly different than the Greek *plēthos* used in the LXX rendering of Genesis 48:19, but it adds an important element to understanding *the character* of these nations. *Plērōma* means the “**act of fulfilling specific specifications, fulfilling, fulfillment**” (BDAG).¹² When all Israel is restored, the “fulness of the nations,” meaning those who have met specific expectations where scattered Israel is, will be brought into the fold. The blindness that is upon all Israel that Paul refers to is spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah:

“Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, *and* a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem” (8:14).

All of Israel has stumbled over the Rock, who is Messiah Yeshua. The Jewish people have failed to acknowledge Jesus as the Messiah. Many of scattered Israel/Ephraim among the nations have known that Yeshua is the Messiah, but have been unconscious of their heritage as a part of Israel and have (often) denied the importance of the Torah. The Jewish people, while maintaining their heritage as the key part of Israel and keeping the Torah, have largely denied Yeshua. In these days as scattered Israel/Ephraim appears to be returning to the Commonwealth of Israel, we understand that he truly is returning as the “fulness” of the nations, *plērōma*, implying a maturation that is happening as many non-Jewish Believers enter into the Messianic movement and embrace a Torah obedient lifestyle with Yeshua as the focus.

The possibility that the “Gentiles,” or more specifically the “nations” in Romans 11:25, includes the scattered seed of Israel/Ephraim, is very intriguing. What it may further imply is that when “Gentiles” are referred to in parts of Scripture, some reference to scattered Israel may be intended. Perhaps Ephraim was to be so scattered into the nations that he would become

¹⁰ Heb. *b'kol ha'goyim* (בְּכֹל הַגּוֹיִם).

¹¹ חזרה נביאים כתובים והברית החדשה (Jerusalem: Bible Society in Israel, 1991), NT p 204.

¹² Frederick William Danker, ed., et. al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, third edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 830.

indistinguishable from them. If indeed true, Paul's words in Ephesians 2:11-12 could take on some new meaning for us:

"Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called 'Uncircumcision' by the so-called 'Circumcision,' *which is performed in the flesh by human hands—remember that you were at that time separate from Messiah, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.*"

All non-Jewish Believers who have been forgiven by God of their sin need to recognize their former state. They were *of the nations by birth*, among those multitudes of ethnicities that scattered Israel/Ephraim's seed was destined to become or be scattered toward. Now in Messiah Yeshua, those who have been redeemed by His blood have been made a part of the Commonwealth of Israel. Thanks to His mercy, *all of us* are brought into the holy nation that as non-Believers we were once separated from. However, the question is whether this separation from Israel is something that non-Jewish Messianics have always had, or whether it has only been temporary as in the past we were once a part of Israel. This is where some people get confused.

There are No "Jew and Gentile are one in Messiah" Verses

One claim that we encounter day in and day out is the fact that some say that all the Apostles ever speak about is "Jew and Gentile" being one in the Messiah. It is not uncommon to see an entire host of Scriptures given in refutation of the understanding of all Israel coming together because "Jew and Gentile" are only being spoken of, not "Judah and Ephraim."

It is notable that two of the Bible versions used to prove this supposed "Jew and Gentile" connection are not literal translations. The first, the New International Version, takes some liberties that confuse, or even disturb some Believers. This is not to say that the NIV is a "bad" translation, but it is not one that should be widely used as a primary translation.

The second translation is David H. Stern's Complete Jewish Bible. While we respect the CJB as a good reference tool, we do not recommend it as a primary translation, either. It is paraphrased in a way no different than the Living Bible. This likewise is not to say that the CJB is a "bad" translation, but it is to say that it does have a bias.

Both of these translations frequently refer to "Jew and Gentile" being one in Messiah, when in actuality the literal translation would read "Jew and Greek." We ask you to consider a listing of Scriptures where these two translations have taken some liberties. We compare the NIV and CJB translation against the Greek New Testament (UBS Fourth Revised Edition), Young's Literal Translation (YLT), and the New American Standard Bible (NASU). Do note that some verses in the NIV have properly rendered "Greek" as "Greek."

You may consider this examination a bit extensive, but after comparing the following translations you should be convinced of the problem of "Jew and Gentile," and the possible manipulation that has ensued among certain Christian and Messianic Jewish theologians.

Romans 1:16

NIV: I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

CJB: For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting, to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

GNT: Οὐ γὰρ ἐπαισχύνομαι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, δύναμις γὰρ θεοῦ ἐστὶν εἰς σωτηρίαν παντὶ τῷ πιστεύοντι, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι.

Ou gar epaischunomai to euaggelion, dunamis gar Theou estin eis sōtērian panti tō pisteuonti, Ioudaiō [Jew] te prōton kai Hellēni [Greek].

YLT: [F]or I am not ashamed of the good news of the Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to every one who is believing, both to Jew first, and to Greek.

NASU: For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 2:9-10

NIV: There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.

CJB: Yes, he will pay back misery and anguish to every human being who does evil, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile; but glory and honor and *shalom* to everyone who keeps doing what is good, to the Jew first, then to the Gentile.

GNT: θλιψις καὶ στενοχωρία ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου τοῦ κατεργαζομένου τὸ κακόν, Ἰουδαίου τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνας· δόξα δὲ καὶ τιμὴ καὶ εἰρήνη παντὶ τῷ ἐργαζομένῳ τὸ ἀγαθόν, Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἕλληνι

Thlipsis kai stenochōria epi pasan psuchēn anthrōpou tou katergazomenou to kakon, Ioudaiou [Jew] te prōton kai Hellēnos [Greek] doxa de kai timē kai eirēnē panti tō ergazomenō to agathon, Ioudaiō [Jew] te prōton kai Hellēni [Greek].

YLT: [T]ribulation and distress, upon every soul of man that is working the evil, both of Jew first, and of Greek; and glory, and honour, and peace, to every one who is working the good, both to Jew first, and to Greek.

NASU: *There will be* tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek, but glory and honor and peace to everyone who does good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

Romans 10:12

NIV: For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him.

CJB: That means that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—*Adonai* is the same for everyone, rich toward everyone who calls on him.

GNT: οὐ γάρ ἐστιν διαστολή Ἰουδαίου τε καὶ Ἕλληνας, ὁ γὰρ αὐτὸς κύριος πάντων, πλουτῶν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἐπικαλουμένους αὐτόν

Ou gar estin diastolē Ioudaiou [Jew] te kai Hellēnos [Greek], ho gar autos Kurios pantōn, ploutōn eis pantas tous epikaloumenous auton.

YLT: [F]or there is no difference between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord of all {is} rich to all those calling upon Him.

NASB: For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him.

1 Corinthians 10:32

NIV: Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God.

CJB: Do not be an obstacle to anyone—not to Jews, not to Gentiles, and not to God's Messianic Community.

GNT: ἀπρόσκοποι καὶ Ἰουδαίοις γίνεσθε καὶ Ἕλλησιν καὶ τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ

Aposkopoi kai Ioudaiois [Jews] ginesthe kai Hellēsin [Greeks] kai tē ekklēsia tou Theou

YLT: [B]ecome offenceless, both to Jews and Greeks, and to the assembly of God.

NASU: Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God.

1 Corinthians 12:13

NIV: For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

CJB: For it was by one Spirit that we were all immersed into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free; and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

GNT: καὶ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ πνεύματι ἡμεῖς πάντες εἰς ἓν σῶμα ἐβαπτίσθημεν, εἴτε Ἰουδαῖοι εἴτε Ἕλληνες εἴτε δοῦλοι εἴτε ἐλεύθεροι, καὶ πάντες ἐν πνεύμα ἐποτίσθημεν

Kai gar en eni pneumati hēmeis pantes eis hen sōma ebaptisthēmen, eite Ioudaioi [Jews] eite Hellēnes [Greeks] eite douloi eite elutheroi, kai pantes hen pneuma epotisthēmen

YLT: [F]or also in one Spirit we all to one body were baptized, whether Jews or Greeks, whether servants or freemen, and all into one Spirit were made to drink.

NASU: For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Colossians 3:11

NIV: Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

CJB: The new self allows no room for discriminating between Gentile and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, foreigner, savage, slave, free man; on the contrary, in all, the Messiah is everything.

GNT: ὅπου οὐκ ἔστι Ἕλληνας καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκυθῆς, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος, ἀλλὰ [τὰ] πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσιν Χριστός

Hopou ouk eni Hellēn [Greek] kai Ioudaios [Jew], peritomē kai akrobustia, barbaros, Skuthēs, doulos, eleutheros, alla [ta] panta kai en pasin Christos

YLT: [W]here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, servant, freeman—but the all and in all—Christ.

NASU: *a renewal* in which there is no *distinction between* Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

A comparison of these Scriptures shows that there is some inaccuracy on the part of a few Bible translators in regard to “Jew and Greek,” and its improper translation as “Jew and Gentile.”

Some may say that this is not a big issue, because what is the difference between “Gentile” and “Greek”? The difference is that “Greek” is a **proper nationality** just like “Jew.” No one would suggest ever rendering the terms “Jew” or “Jewish” by anything differently. The scattered seed of Israel/Ephraim was promised to be a *melo ha’goyim* and appears to be *to plērōma tōn ethnōn* which Paul refers to in Romans 11:25. It is important whether or not we translate something correctly in its proper form, or whether we reduce it to something generic such as “Gentile.”

Not surprisingly, concerning the Greeks, the High Priest Jonathan attests in 1 Maccabees 12:21, “It has been found in writing concerning the Spartans and the Jews that they are brethren and are of the family of Abraham.” In regard to New Testament translation it is entirely inappropriate to render *Hellēn* (Ἕλληνη) as “Gentile(s),” because in actuality such Greeks may be or include scattered Israelites. This is not to say that scattered Israel is exclusively made up of Greeks, but rather that the Greeks could have included members of the scattered Northern Kingdom within their ranks. If it is true of the Greeks, then who else might it be true of? Scattered Israel is all over the world (cf. Genesis 28:14).

Would it be inappropriate to say that the translation used to reduce the position of the “Greeks” in Scripture to that of “Gentiles” is a tactic of our enemy to prevent all Israel from being restored? Such inaccurate translations can keep people wondering whether the Apostolic Scriptures only teach about “Jew and Gentile” coming together, when in actuality the prophecies of Scripture speak of something more. It speaks about “Jew and Greek” coming together, and the Greeks are possibly one of many nationalities to where the lost seed of Israel has been spread.

Who are the “Companions”?

But even with this evidence before us concerning the “Gentiles,” what about those who have no physical claim to being descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob/Israel? Are they excluded from the community of Israel? Do they have no hope of salvation? Some have used the claim that the Two-House teaching focuses so much on “Judah and Ephraim” that it is elitist and excludes those truly of the nations from the salvation available in Israel’s Messiah.

This is not true at all. Non-Israelites are clearly spoken of in Ezekiel 37:15-28 which detail the two sticks representing the Two Houses of Israel coming together, and it includes the “companions” of both Houses of Israel:

“The word of the LORD came again to me saying, ‘And you, son of man, take for yourself one stick and write on it, “For Judah and for the sons of Israel, **his companions**”; then take another stick and write on it, “For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim and all the house of Israel, **his companions**”’” (Ezekiel 37:15-16).

Who are “his companions”? The Hebrew word here in its singular form is *chaver* (חֵבֵר), which AMG indicates is “A masculine noun indicating friendship, association with, being friends with, companion.”¹³ Its plural form in modern Hebrew is *chaverim*, which means “friends.” In other words, when Judah and Ephraim are united there will be more than just “physical Israelites” as part of the unification. Judah and Ephraim’s “friends,” if you will, are involved in the process.

These people are non-Israelites but a part of Israel through Messiah Yeshua. They will be most certainly *included* in Israel’s restoration. There is no exclusion of true “Gentiles” in this regard, nor exclusion of true “Gentiles” from membership in Israel. One way or another, these *chaverim*—perhaps even **the majority of those involved in the restoration process**—will adjoin themselves to one of the Two Houses of Israel and are considered full-fledged citizens of the Commonwealth of Israel. Keep in mind that sojourners have always been welcome within Israel, per the Divine mandate given to Abraham and later Ancient Israel to be a blessing to the whole world (Genesis 12:2; Deuteronomy 4:6).

Conclusion

Where do we go from here now that you have learned a little about the term “Gentile,” and the fact that true “Gentiles” are not excluded from all Israel coming together?

We should be **careful** using the term “Gentile” when referring to non-Jewish Believers. It would be best to use the term “non-Jew” as opposed to something that *can refer* to those who are pagan idolaters. Secondly, we must emphasize that “nation(s)” is an appropriate understanding of “Gentile(s).” We also must realize that scattered Israel/Ephraim was prophesied to become the

¹³ Baker and Carpenter, 311.

fullness of the nations, and when the "Gentiles" are referred to, what may be referred to are where some of the scattered descendants of the Northern Kingdom of Israel could have gone.

Most importantly, understand that the Apostles do not talk about "Jew and Gentile" being one in Messiah. The Scriptures only speak of "Jew and Greek" coming together, and "Greek" is a proper nationality. It is one of the many such nationalities to which the scattered seed of Israel/Ephraim may have been spread. Ultimately, we know that as the good news has gone to *all nations*, surely, at least some of scattered Israel/Ephraim received it in order for God to fulfill His promises of Israel's restoration. We certainly have much to think about and consider as today's Messianic movement grows, and as the Lord is faithful to His promise to restore *all His people!*

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