

Review of DeCosta's “Gentiles” Video

In this presentation I will be reviewing Jason DeCosta's video entitled
“Were the ‘Gentiles’ of the NT actually the scattered”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xjpOmRPFuk>

What I Won't Be Doing

- I won't be attacking limbs. After watching a video entitled "The Resurrection was exclusively for Israel," I saw that the definition of 'Gentiles' is the cornerstone for the entire doctrine.
- So instead of addressing particular points that Jason holds because of his definition of 'Gentiles,' I'll deal with the definition.
- If it can be shown contextually that 'Gentiles' refers to those who were not descendants of Abraham, then I can move on to other of his teachings that may not be dependent on this point.

My Purpose [1/2]

- My purpose, as always, is to seek the truth. If Jason has the truth, then I want it.
- I don't know Jason, and I have never corresponded with him, so this is purely an exercise in increasing our knowledge of the Bible.
- The reason I am reviewing this video is because it was suggested to me to do so by one of you, so I hope this is as beneficial to you as it is to me.
- My position: the term 'Gentiles' refers sometimes to Israel, but other times it refers to those not descended from Abraham.

My Purpose [2/2]

- While that is my presupposition, as I execute the following word study, I'm only taking what the context reveals - no more and no less.
- In other words, if a passage leans towards the IO doctrine, then so be it.
- However, if a passage does not, then I won't try to force it.
- Basically, I'm going to attempt to be as objective as possible.

Order of Business [1 / 2]

- This type of study requires me to be exhaustive, but time restricts me from doing so in my presentation, so I'll attempt to take a large enough sample of passages in order to convey the general meaning of the terms under consideration.
- First, we will do a word study on all of the words translated Gentiles and other words translated from the same Greek words.
- Second, as we do the word study, we will classify them as 'D' and 'ND' (descendants and non-descendants - if there are ND at all). Otherwise, they will be marked 'NA' for non-applicable.

Order of Business (cont.) [2/2]

- Third, we will examine Old Testament prophecies that prophecy about the inclusion of the Gentiles.
- Fourth, we will examine Jason's arguments in light of the evidence above. Again, while I have my presuppositions, I'm doing my best to leave my convictions at the door.

How the Greek Words are Translated

- The word Gentiles comes from two different Greek words: ἔθνος [G1484 - ethnos, eth'-nos] and Ἕλληνας [G1672 - hellen, hel'-lane].
- *Ethnos* is used in 152 verses (153 counting 1 variant meaning “manner of the *ethnos*” - Galatians 2:14), and it is translated as Gentiles (87), nations (37), nation (24), people (16), peoples (2), and heathen (5) in the KJV.
- *Hellen* is used in 26 verses, and it is translated Gentiles (4), Gentile (2), Greeks (13), and Greek (7) in the KJV.
- Total verses: 178

What the Scholars Say [1/2]

- Adam Clarke on John 7:35, “...Others suppose that the Gentiles themselves are meant - others, that the ten tribes which had been long lost are here intended” (1832, E-Sword).
- A.T. Robertson on John 7:35, “Confessing his failure to teach the Jews in Palestine, ‘thus ignorantly anticipating the course Christianity took; what seemed unlikely and impossible to them became actual’ (Dods)” (1930, E-Sword).
- Thus, there is not an across-the-board consensus on the meaning of these terms among the commentaries.

What the Scholars Say [2/2]

- The Lexicons, however, are clear concerning the two Greek words.
- Every commentary I consulted presented multiple definitions for the word *Ethnos*.
- Thayer's, Strong's, and Mounce to name a few.
- Thayer's, for instance, defines *ethnos* as “a multitude, a race, a nation, a foreign nation (to Israel - DR).”
- However, it will be up to our word study to determine the meaning of these words within their respective contexts.

Passages Under Consideration

- After reading every passage containing the words *Ethnos* or *Hellen*, these verses stand out the most.
- *Ethnos*: Matthew 20:19; 24:7 | Luke 7:5 | John 11:15 | Acts 15:14, 17; 21:11, 19, 21, 25; 28:28 | Romans 2:24; 9:24, 30; 10:19; 15:27 | Galatians 2:8 | Ephesians 3:6 | Revelation 11:2
- *Hellen*: Acts 16:1, 3 | Galatians 2:3
- These 22 passages make up a good sample (12.4%) of the verses that use these two Greek words, and they will assist in painting a picture of the meaning of these words.

Matthew 20:19 ND

- Matthew 20:18-19 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn Him to death, (19) and will hand Him over to the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν) to mock and scourge and crucify Him, and on the third day He will be raised up."
- Pilate was not a descendant of Isaac, and neither was Herod. Herod was an Edomite raised under the Jewish religion:
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Herod-king-of-Judaea>
- The Gentiles here are not the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 24:7 NA

- Matthew 24:7 "For nation [ἔθνος] will rise against nation [ἔθνος], and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes."
- This word, as opposed to the last instance, is singular and not plural, and it refers to an entire nation.
- Thus, this particular instance doesn't fall within the spectrum of verses that we need to consider.
- However, the nation could be D or ND.

Luke 7:5

- Luke 7:5 “...for he loves our nation [ἔθνος] and it was he who built us our synagogue.”
- Again, it is used in the singular here, but this is obviously speaking of D.
- However, it is NA.

John 11:50 NA

- John 11:50 “nor do you take into account that it is expedient for you that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation [ἔθνος] not perish.”
- There are a lot of examples like this, but it is important to point out that the singular form of the world simply means “nation.”
- This word, within and of itself, does not demand it to be the descendants of Abraham or a ND nation.
- This passage is concerning D, but it is NA.

Acts 15:14, 17 [1/2]

- Acts 15:14 "Simeon has related how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles (ἐθνῶν) a people for His name."
- Acts 15:17 "SO THAT THE REST OF MANKIND MAY SEEK THE LORD, AND ALL THE GENTILES (ἔθνη) WHO ARE CALLED BY MY NAME."
[emphasis in original to denote OT quote]
- The key to this text would be the OT reference: Amos 9:11-12. Using the NT quotation, the MS difficulty is solved. Edom is actually Adam (men or mankind as in Acts).

Acts 15:14, 17 [2/2] ND

- Isaiah 63:19 “We have become like those over whom You have never ruled, Like those who were not called by Your name.”
- Through the restoration of the throne of David, Israel would possess the nations and they would be called by the Lord’s name.
- Notice the contrast between this attitude and the one in the OT.

Acts 21:11, 19, 21, 25 [1/2]

- Acts 21:11 “And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, ‘This is what the Holy Spirit says: ‘In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles (ἐθνῶν).’””
- Acts 21:19 “After he had greeted them, he began to relate one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν) through his ministry.”
- Acts 21:21 “and they have been told about you, that you are teaching all the Jews who are among the Gentiles (ἔθνη) to forsake Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children nor to walk according to the customs.”

Acts 21:11, 19, 21, 25 [2/2] ND

- Acts 21:25 “But concerning the Gentiles (ἔθνη) who have believed, we wrote, having decided that they should abstain from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from fornication.”
- The first passage, as with Jesus, is a reference to ND individuals.
- The next three conform to what can be seen in Acts 15 - again, ND.
- Notice the contrast: one keeps the Law, but one does not. Luke 2:36 - Anna could enter the temple though she was of Asher.

Acts 28:28 ND

- Acts 28:28 "Therefore let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles (ἔθνεσιν); they will also listen."
- The Gentiles here stand in contrast to the "this people" of verse 26; therefore, these are ND as well.

Romans 2:24 ND

- Romans 2:24 “For ‘THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES (*ἔθνεσιν*) BECAUSE OF YOU,’ just as it is written.”
- This is found in Isaiah 52:5, and it is those that rule over them that are speaking evil of God’s name. Thus, the Gentiles here are ND.

Romans 9:24, 30 D/ ND

- Romans 9:24 “even us, whom He also called, not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles (ἔθνω̃ν).”
- Romans 9:30 “What shall we say then? That Gentiles (ἔθνη), who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is by faith;”
- The quotation from Hosea within this context is an obvious reference to the restoration of Israel after the flesh. So it is used in 1 Peter 1:10.
- In the latter verse, there is a contrast between Israel and the Gentiles.

Romans 10:19 ND

- Romans 10:19 “But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, ‘I WILL MAKE YOU JEALOUS BY THAT WHICH IS NOT A NATION (ἔθνη), BY A NATION WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WILL I ANGER YOU.’”
- This is a quotation from the song of Moses: Deuteronomy 32:21.
- The word here is singular; however, due to the context of the passage, it gives us insight to Paul’s audience: a people that did not know God (i.e. ND).

Romans 15:27 ND

- Romans 15:27 “Yes, they were pleased to do so, and they are indebted to them. For if the Gentiles (ἔθνη) have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things.”
- The Gentiles are not inherently partakers in the spiritual things of Israel; however, the D were (Romans 9:1-4).
- These are people that the promises were not made to.
- Before Israel’s exile, she was promised restoration. These are not the same people.

Galatians 2:8 ND

- Galatians 2:8 “for He who effectually worked for Peter in his apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles (ἔθνη).”
- There was a contrast between Paul’s ministry and Peter’s ministry. If Paul was seeking the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” as Jesus did in His ministry and as He had His disciples do, then such a distinction here would not make any sense.

Ephesians 3:6 ND

- Ephesians 3:6 “...to be specific, that the Gentiles (ἔθνη) are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.”
- What was not made known in times past? The restoration of Israel was certainly know, but there was confusion as to the role of the heathen nations in the eschatological plan.

Revelation 11:2 ND

- (Revelation 11:2) "Leave out the court which is outside the temple and do not measure it, for it has been given to the nations (*ἔθνεσιν*); and they will tread under foot the holy city for forty-two months."
- This is the same word translated Gentiles throughout the New Testament.
- Therefore, the word Gentiles is not limited to D.
- This passage is in reference to the Roman armies, so it is classified under the ND passages.

Ethnos Conclusion

- While the word *ethnos* is used in reference to the descendants of Isaac, it is not exclusively used in that manner.
- While the promises belonged to Israel, those of the nations in the first century were able to share in those promises through Christ.

Acts 16:1, 3 ND

- Acts 16:1-3 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek (Ἕλληνας), (2) and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. (3) Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek (Ἕλληνας).
- There is a difference between Timothy's father and those in Acts 6:1. Timothy's father was not a Jew while those in Acts 6:1 were.

Galatians 2:3 ND

- Galatians 2:3 “But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek (“Ελλην), was compelled to be circumcised.”
- If Titus was of the twelve tribes of Israel, there was no reason for him to abstain from circumcision. He, like Timothy, should have shown his allegiance to Israel in that way.
- However, Titus falls under the ND category.

Hellen Conclusion

- The word *Hellen* does not only refer to Jews who spoke Greek, but it refers to those outside of the Covenant and Promises as well.

Old Testament Prophecies

- Many OT prophecies have been surveyed already, but one more will suffice.
- Isaiah 49:6 “He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.’”
- Not only would God restore Israel, but Jesus’ light would shine unto the all men.

Jason's Arguments

- 1 Peter 1:1 (time: 4:45) - Hasty Generalization
- 2 Peter 3:14-16 (time: 7:00) - Non Sequitur
- The men who are to repent are those under the first covenant - Hebrews 9:15 (time: 17:00) - Ephesians 2:12
- Acts 5:31 (time: 17:00) - Hasty Generalization - Acts 11:18
- Isaiah 11:10-13 (time: 19:54) - Three groups - not two
- Jeremiah 16 only Israel (time: 21:30) - Jeremiah 16:19-20
- Redemption (time: 22:45) - sold under sin. Law besides the Law (Romans 5)