

## Use of the Word “Nation” in the Old Testament

**The word “nation(s)” was most commonly translated from “gowy,” Strong’s # 01471.**  
It is defined as:

- 1) *nation, people*
  - 1a) *nation, people*
    - 1a1) *usually of non-Hebrew people*
    - 1a2) *of descendants of Abraham*
    - 1a3) *of Israel*

“Gowy,” sometimes shortened to “goy” was used 558 times, being translated into “nation” 374 of those times. It was also translated as “people”, “heathen”, and “Gentiles.” Generally speaking, this use of “nation” was in regards to a group of people collectively, without regards to their locale. Example: the Nation of Israel was a collective group of people, descendants of Jacob-Israel, no matter where they called “home.”

**The word “nation(s)” was also translated from “am,” Strong’s # 05971.**  
It is defined as:

- 1) *nation, people*
  - 1a) *people, nation*
  - 1b) *persons, members of one's people, compatriots, country-men*
- 2) *kinsman, kindred*

“Am” was most often translated as “people” (1836 times) and was translated “nation” 17 times. Examples include:

Deuteronomy 14:2, "For thou art an holy **people** unto the LORD thy God, and the LORD hath chosen thee to be a peculiar **people** unto himself, above all the **nations** that are upon the earth."

1 Chronicles 16:24, "Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvelous works among all **nations**."

Nehemiah 9:22, "Moreover thou gavest them kingdoms and **nations**, and didst divide them into corners: so they possessed the land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon, and the land of Og king of Bashan."

Ezekiel 38:8, "After many days thou shalt be visited: in the latter years thou shalt come into the land that is brought back from the sword, and is gathered out of many **people**, against the mountains of Israel, which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the **nations**, and they shall dwell safely all of them."

**Another word translated “nation(s)” was “ezrach”, Strong’s # 0249.**  
It is defined as:

- 1) *a native (one rising from the soil)*
  - 1a) *of man, native Israelites*

*1b) of tree, native (to Israel)*

While only used once for the word “nation”, it was also translated as born, country, land, and homeborn.

Leviticus 18:26, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own **nation**, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you."

**Another word translated “nation(s)” was “*ummah*”, Strong’s # 0523.**

It is defined as:

- 1) *people, tribe, nation*

It was translated twice “people” and once “nation,” as in the following verse:

Genesis 25:16, "These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their **nations**."

**Another word translated “nation(s)” was “*leom*”, Strong’s # 03816.**

It is defined as:

- 1) *a people, nation*

Translated “nation” 10 times, it was also translated “people” and “folk”. Examples are:

Genesis 27:29, "Let people serve thee, and **nations** bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Psalms 47:3, "He shall subdue the people under us, and the **nations** under our feet."

Psalms 57:9, "I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the **nations**."

Psalms 67:4, "O let the **nations** be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the **nations** upon earth. Selah."

Psalms 108:3, "I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto thee among the **nations**."

Proverbs 24:24, "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou art righteous; him shall the people curse, **nations** shall abhor him:"

Isaiah 17:12, "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of **nations**, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!"

Isaiah 17:13, "The **nations** shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind"

Isaiah 51:4, "Hearken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my **nation**: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people."

**Another word translated “nation(s)” was “’ummah”, Strong’s # 0524.**

It is defined as:

- 1) *people, tribe, nation*

It is translated only as “nation” a total of 8 times.

Ezra 4:10, "And the rest of the **nations** whom the great and noble Asnappar brought over, and set in the cities of Samaria, and the rest that are on this side the river, and at such a time."

Daniel 3:4, "Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, **nations**, and languages,"

Daniel 3:7, "Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the **nations**, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up."

Daniel 3:29, "Therefore I make a decree, That every people, **nation**, and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort."

Daniel 4:1, "Nebuchadnezzar the king, unto all people, **nations**, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you."

Daniel 5:19, "And for the majesty that he gave him, all people, **nations**, and languages, trembled and feared before him: whom he would he slew; and whom he would he kept alive; and whom he would he set up; and whom he would he put down."

Daniel 6:25, "Then king Darius wrote unto all people, **nations**, and languages, that dwell in all the earth; Peace be multiplied unto you."

Daniel 7:14, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, **nations**, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

**Another word translated “nation(s)” was “’erets”, Strong’s # 0776.**

It is defined as:

- 1) *land, earth*
- 1a) *earth*
  - 1a1) *whole earth (as opposed to a part)*
  - 1a2) *earth (as opposed to heaven)*

- 1a3) earth (inhabitants)*
- 1b) land*
  - 1b1) country, territory*
  - 1b2) district, region*
  - 1b3) tribal territory*
  - 1b4) piece of ground*
  - 1b5) land of Canaan, Israel*
  - 1b6) inhabitants of land*
  - 1b7) Sheol, land without return, (under) world*
  - 1b8) city (-state)*
- 1c) ground, surface of the earth*
  - 1c1) ground*
  - 1c2) soil*
- 1d) (in phrases)*
  - 1d1) people of the land*
  - 1d2) space or distance of country (in measurements of distance)*
  - 1d3) level or plain country*
  - 1d4) land of the living*
  - 1d5) end(s) of the earth*
- 1e) (almost wholly late in usage)*
  - 1e1) lands, countries*
    - 1e1a) often in contrast to Canaan*

It is used over 2500 times, mostly as “land,” but also as “earth”, “country”, “ground”, “world”, “field”, and once as “nation”.

[Isaiah 37:18, "Of a truth, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries,"](#)