

# Immigration and You

A biblical exploration of the definition of the sojourner and its implications.

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When I was about 11 years old we moved to a town called Salinas, CA. Salinas is an agricultural town with migrant workers coming in and out of town all year long. My father had been out of rehab for a while then, and was pastoring a Spanish speaking church in town. Times were lean. One sunday, after church, on the way home from church my mom pulled the car over next to a field of lettuce. She ran over, harvested a couple heads, and got back in the car, and we went home and ate them. I berated my mom, like a tiny little lawyer, saying that she was basically just stealing. I don't remember what resolution we came to then, but I do remember eating the lettuce; and, now ashamedly, yelling at my mom for it. Having studied for this paper there is a part of me that admires my mother all the more, and where I stand accused and convicted by the word of God. So I begin with repentance.<sup>1</sup>

My mother is a “wetback”, a derogatory term used for an illegal immigrant who crossed the Rio Grande to come to the United States. My mother was<sup>2</sup> a stranger in the biblical sense. But more specifically, she came here to stay here. She came for the better life that many speak of when they talk about coming to America. The bible tells us to treat the stranger a very particular way. And by biblical standards, I should not have been berating my mother for taking those heads of lettuce. As we'll see, they likely belonged to her.

This paper discusses what the bible says about immigration, and distinguishes between the term “stranger” and “immigrant”. It also briefly touches on motivations, though there is not very much to explain beyond economic reasons. It will also discuss why mass immigration is dangerous for a country, as well expose the current immigration push for what it is - a drive to shift away from Christian culture. It is an effective method, by the way. Lastly we will land on some proposed solutions. This work does not attempt to debate, but rather expose and offer an

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<sup>1</sup> But don't worry, i'm not doing that woke thing.

<sup>2</sup> All papers fixed now.

application for Christians - but God's law applies to every last human, authority, government, drag-queen get-together, and family; so really, it's application for everyone.

## **The Bible**

”He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. <sup>19</sup>You are also to love the resident alien, since you were resident aliens in the land of Egypt” - Dt 10:18-20 (CSB)

Recently, John Piper posted just verse 19<sup>3</sup>, and was immediately roasted. I would like to coin the phrase “posted and roasted”. He attempted to “soften” his stance on immigration by adding that Christians were also strangers, or used to be. Later he claimed that he wasn't commenting on it. However, even if he truly did not intend (though it's hard to argue he did not) to weigh in on the immigration conversation, he weighed in on it. He's right, of course, the bible defends the “stranger”. But the bible defines “the stranger” very differently than today's perception and definition of immigration. “Stranger” in the bible is not describing mass amounts of people coming into the country and transforming the culture along the way. Israel was not to oppress those who were strangers, sojourners, or immigrants. The word is “ger” (גר). Consider these three categories that describe what a *stranger* is, how Israel is supposed to treat them, and how to treat an actual immigrant.

### 1. The People of God as immigrants/strangers

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<sup>3</sup> Dale Chamberlain, “John Piper Sparks Social Media Backlash After Quoting Bible Verse About Immigration,” ChurchLeaders, February 26, 2026, <https://churchleaders.com/news/2214231-john-piper-social-media-immigration.html>.

The people of God themselves were categorized as resident aliens. But that means something different than immigrants. When they were resident aliens, they were in Egypt and the intention was always to leave. They didn't belong there. When they got to Canaan and took over everything, they were invaders, but now officially immigrants - they were coming to stay. And then, when the land spit them out, they were back to being sojourners. Aliens. Resident for a time in another place with the intention of going home after 70 years.

Note that the Israelites coming in and taking over the land was a judgement on the people of Canaan. Genesis 15:13-16 gives the reason for why the Amorites were being kicked out of the land (sin - mostly sacrificing babies).

The bible also calls the Israelites *resident aliens*. The word *alien* implies that they do not belong there. And that they will be moving on. This use of the word is not the way the current conversation defines immigrants in the U.S. categorizes - their intent is to stay.

Immigration was also used as part of the judgement of Israel. Consider the warning given to the Israelites about getting kicked out of the land. Leviticus 18:24-25 warns that they should not take up the same sins as the people before them did, because they also would get kicked out of the land. They would become strangers, yet again. And in the year 586 BCE<sup>4</sup> they were kicked out for the way they oppressed the innocent and worshipped other gods (mostly, by sacrificing babies).

Finally, consider that when the people of Israel, the northern kingdom, were spit out of the land, the Assyrian king moved in a bunch of his people to govern the land. According to Dr. Joe Rigney, this was a regular power move played by kings as it would decentralize political tensions and loyalties. The bible teaches that people who are *resident aliens* do not intend to stay in the land. The resident alien is not the same as an immigrant.

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<sup>4</sup> Before Christ's Era

## 2. God hates it when a country abuses the stranger

The people who came into the common wealth of Israel were not necessarily in a good situation. The bible constantly groups “strangers” with widows, the poor, and the fatherless. For instance in the book of Deuteronomy the people of Israel are instructed not to harvest everything from their field. They were to leave some for poor people to come through and have food to eat. This group did not own land, they were not part of people’s houses (in the political sense). An immigrant would be in a similar job/land situation. They may have been able to work things out if they planned the whole coming to Israel thing, but generally speaking we cannot ignore that the bible placed them in the category of the poor.<sup>5</sup> Whether by refuge they sought, or economic status there were enough of them to get a mention for them not to be abused.

God hates it when his people abuse the stranger. Again, this assumes that they are not in a position to defend or provide for themselves. Over and over the prophets warn against this specific act of oppression that the Israelites were actively engaging in.

Some example scriptures. Jeremiah 7:5-7 - Says to “no longer oppress the resident alien”. Zechariah 7:9-10 - Calls for fair decisions for the widow, the fatherless, **resident alien**, and the poor. Malachi 3:5 - God is against those who oppress hired workers, widow, fatherless, and deny justice to **resident aliens**. Ezekiel 47:22-23 - Is a call to treat **aliens** well.

This should serve as a warning for any conservative, bible believing person in the U.S. or anywhere else. Poor people should not be treated as less than human. Included in that group are people from other countries dwelling in our midst. Heed the warning given in scripture regarding the treatment of the stranger.

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<sup>5</sup> Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22 and Deuteronomy 24:19-21 - categorize the foreigner as reason to leave food behind for gleaning.

3. Those who would join the commonwealth of Israel, and those who would lead them away from God.

The person who wanted to worship God, and live amongst the Israelites is the most like an immigrant in the manner of how immigrants are characterized today. One longer example is Ruth in the book of Ruth. But there are many scriptures which speak of people's purpose in coming either to stay or visit (sojourn) in that they are even invited to worship!<sup>6</sup>

Exodus 12:48-49 tells of the immigrant who wants to participate in the passover meal. He is given the okay, but he must observe the Israelite way, namely, circumcision. They are expected to follow the law in order to stay in the land and participate. The implication I take is that they desire to be part of the nation. This immigrant is coming for the "better life". In this case, the true life.

Isaiah 56:3-7 tells of a foreigner who has joined himself to the Lord. Again the implication is that they came to be a convert. Similarly, in Acts 2:10, it is generally accepted that there are both Jews and converts in the city at the time of the power of the gospel descending on them. The Peoples are welcomed in. But the Peoples came to worship God, and so were willing to change everything about themselves to fit in.

In this group would be included Ruth, and Rahab. They desired to be Israelites. (Christians).

This third category is closest to the way we think of immigration today. The difference between an immigrant and a stranger are different. And the bible does not use the word

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<sup>6</sup> Looks like the Lord had his plan to invite every nation into the covenant from the beginning.

immigrant to define who should be treated well. Next we move on to motivations for moving to the U.S.

## **Immigration in the U.S.**

“It’s the economy, stupid!” - Bill Clinton campaign slogan.

It’s no secret that this is a powerful reason for coming to the U.S. The Irish first started coming over during the potato famine.<sup>7</sup> And then they just kept doing it. Things were fairly good here in the U.S. Even in the 1850’s. So they just kept coming. Before that, there were those who understood the need for living out Christian religious freedom in a new land, untainted by the tyranny of the Roman and English state churches. The pilgrims came here in search of Zion, in search of free and bountiful worship. They were immigrants in today’s sense. They too were in search of a “better life”. Economic prosperity and the hope of a better life as a result is the primary reason for voluntary migration.

In a rather short video, a ted talk explains the general process of coming to the U.S., along with the motivations.<sup>8</sup> This story represents 90% of how Mexicans end up in America and why. Unfortunately, the story of mom and dad working day and night in order to get better opportunities for their children are all too true. Dad’s away, kids are at home, and gangs start up. For lack of fathers. Sons get in trouble. And sons resent fathers.<sup>9</sup> It is sad. There is a saving grace

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<sup>7</sup> Hatton, Timothy J., and Jeffrey G. Williamson. *The Age of Mass Migration: Causes and Economic Impact*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. (Page 75)

<sup>8</sup> Miriam Martinez, "Being Undocumented Is My American Story," YouTube video, 10:14, posted by "TEDx Talks," February 10, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6qkFNOVebo>.

<sup>9</sup> This is the example of my dad, and a truly lived experience as i worked in and grew up in urban ministry.

here, though, Mexico is a primarily Christian nation (roman catholic).<sup>10</sup> This means that many of the values that Americans hold near and dear have heavy crossover with Mexican culture.

Other reasons people come to the United States have to do with wars, famines, and various geopolitical reasons. These are called refugees. For instance in California, you might be speaking to a russian man and family who came to be a programmer in the silicon valley because pay for the same work in Russia was bad, and the next you'd be talking to a graphic design artist whose family had to leave Vietnam during the Vietnam War. In these examples the people coming want to integrate. So what to do with those who do not want to integrate and want to keep their culture, and religion? This is the question, even though they are refugees, with Somalis in the Minnesota area.

There is nothing inherently wrong with them being here, given the conflict they came out of initially, but there has been no effort to integrate into American culture. However, in the minnesota area they now represent about 3% of the population.<sup>11</sup> They have largely kept their culture and are now even making headway into making Sharia law part of the American landscape. In Texas, Islam is showing such prowess that there is a preempting to stop sharia law being imposed.<sup>12</sup> Islam has produced a different culture, with different values than, and even in direct opposition to Christianity. (Meaning, they want to destroy Christians). This presence does not produce cohesion. Cohesion is what will give harmony and general prosperity of the ideas that are championed. I phrase it that way because unity always leads to the desired outcome - the

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<sup>10</sup> It is not within the scope of this paper, but this has drastically shifted as Christianity has been blamed in colonization efforts. There is a massive effort to bring back aztec styled worship. California, for at least 30 years, has seen a movement to recover the old ways. It is now advocated to be taught at school, and they talk about it with religious freedoms clauses all while shunning Christianity.

<sup>11</sup> Pew Research Center. "Religious Landscape Study: Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro Area." Accessed March 10, 2026.

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religious-landscape-study/metro-area/minneapolis-st-paul-mn/>.

<sup>12</sup> Office of Senator John Cornyn, "Cornyn, Tuberville Introduce Defeat Sharia Law in America Act," February 10, 2026,

<https://www.cornyn.senate.gov/news/cornyn-tuberville-introduce-defeat-sharia-law-in-america-act/>.

question is whether that outcome is good or evil. The people who have come either as refugees or for money stay for the same reasons: The money. People come voluntarily for economic reasons, not religious reasons. This does not mean that religion is not involved.

### **The Secular Mindset**

There is a connection between mass immigration and the secular mindset of diversity. When describing immigrants one author made sure to be careful not to use the word “integration” because that word has the telos of an immigrant coming to the U.S. and taking on the U.S. culture. Instead he insisted that the word “incorporation” be used, implying that when people come we should incorporate their culture into the fold.<sup>13</sup> Put another way, their culture *should influence* ours. If we think briefly about the Israelites, they were warned about marrying people outside of tribes of Israel (not for color skin) but because of the gods they worshipped.<sup>14</sup>

### **How Post-Millennialism gave us the globalist movement**

The globalist movement is trying to have the unity of mankind without the repentance from sin and submission to Christ.<sup>15</sup> The goal is pluralism - everyone happily coexisting, ensuring that everyone gets along peacefully. It’s a copy of the world to come that Christ promises.<sup>16</sup>

This reminds me of the way that orcs were created in the world of Tolkien; the enemy has only ever been able to twist that which has already been created. If you didn’t know, orcs, as they appear in the story, were previously elves. The main antagonist in this mythos could never create anything new, only twist what already existed. This may sound like a far reach, but it seems as

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<sup>13</sup> Castles, Stephen, Hein de Haas, and Mark J. Miller. *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. 4th ed. New York: Guilford Press, 2016. (Page 245-246)

<sup>14</sup> Deuteronomy 7:3-4, Exodus 34:15-16, 1 Kings 11:1-4, Nehemiah 13:23-27

<sup>15</sup> The Pluralism Project. "Key Organizations." Harvard University. Accessed March 10, 2026. <https://pluralism.org/key-organizations>.

<sup>16</sup> Isaiah 2:4

though this beautiful vision of a perfect utopian world is taken straight out of the book Revelation.<sup>17</sup> Stolen, more like. The vision of a perfect city with everything that is needed.<sup>18</sup> The vision of trees that heal the nations. Swords being beaten into farming equipment. Tanks into combines. They desire that which God has in store for His children, but they will not receive it from Him. And so create their own, twisted version.

Post-millennialism gave us the secular globalist movement because Satan is desperately trying to copy and then twist the intention of God. (Incidentally, this may be a good argument for why post-millennialism is the closest to correct view of things to come).

### **“No human is illegal”**

The wider culture in the U.S. utilizes this argument to build sympathy for your fellow human: the foreigner is not in and of themselves “illegal”. It’s supposed to make you think that if you call them “illegal” you are, in essence, dehumanizing them. This however is only an effective emotional manipulation. It is not a fact. Scripture tells the people of God to fully treat the foreigner the same as everyone else. Equally. You’ve already read that they should be taken care of as the widow, orphan, and poor. Have you considered the following scripture?

“You and the alien will be alike before the Lord. The same law and the same ordinance will apply to both you and the alien who resides with you.” - Numbers 15:15a–16

Again, a secular person could argue for whatever he wants because he has an agenda different from God's. Those who would claim to fear God ought to apply this particular scripture to how they deal with the criminal element of those who come in - no matter what country they

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<sup>17</sup> Revelation 21:9-22:5

<sup>18</sup> Revelation 7:16-17

come in from. IF we take the bible seriously, we would also ensure that equal weights and measures are used when dealing with crime. Currently, as it stands, coming in without documentation is illegal.

A person might rebut stating that documentation only applies to the person outside of the commonwealth, and that this isn't treating the outsider as a person who is inside. A sufficient answer would be to point out the amount of licenses, certifications, and yard sale taxes (permits) that a person must have in order to be approved to do anything in the country. We are simply imposing a licensing requirement for those coming in. Equal. Equitable even. So we are indeed treating them the same.

The Secular mindset has the agenda to transform the culture, not to preserve it. Think "melting pot". Ultimately, they seek to break apart the cohesion and fortitude that a Christian world view, and practicing society, provides. Christ as king is in opposition to the secular mindset; but all must bow.<sup>19</sup>

## **Islam**

Diving further into the idea of influence from the outside by way of immigration we must mention Islam again. I briefly spoke about what could be considered an invasion in parts of the United States in parts of Minnesota and even Texas. But, why should I go so far as to use the word "invasion"? Raymond Ibrahim spends an entire book speaking about the mindset of Muslims since the inception of the religion. In the book Sword and Scimitar he outlines the general motivation of the battles leading up to, and then going through, The Crusades. He is able

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<sup>19</sup> Psalm 2:10-12

to capture the mindset of the church in Christian Europe (Western and Eastern included) as well as the religious motivations for starting war by the Muslims.

The general teaching of Islam is that all the world must submit to Allah. If the people will not turn, they are to be destroyed by the sword, or taxed (and searching for an occasion to justify killing the unbeliever). Ibrahim is able to point out several examples from the Quran which enable and sanction the killing of innocents, raping and pillaging, and general molestation of anyone who will not convert, or submit to Allah. However there is one rule, or law that is taught within the Quran that gives the most pause is Taqqiya.

Taqqiya (Tah - key - ah) is the practice of faking conversion to another religion. This was so that the Muslim could pretend to be good with whatever the local religion was, guarding them from the negative repercussions of living in a land not ruled by Sharia. Ibrahim gives examples of what it was like during the time of the *Reconquista* where the Moors (Spanish Muslims) were finally kicked out. The hope was that they would eventually gain enough power and population to utterly overtake the place they are in.

If this does not give a person pause for the way the world situation of immigration of Muslims is unfolding, there is a willful ignorance, or nefarious purpose in doing so. I've even heard of secularists, leftists, hoping to use Muslims' hatred of Christians as a way to undo the foothold that Christianity has in the West. I admit this is conjecture, but given the secular mindset of replacing Christianity, it's hard not to draw a connection. Knowing that there is a deliberate command to deceive can do nothing but build suspicion toward the Muslim stranger in our midst. This is a negative as we are also called to love our enemies.

## Solutions

Context and definition of immigration are crucial to understanding the world that we live in. It tells us how to distinguish, as Christians, between those who are genuine strangers in the land, and those who just want our goods, or are invaders. And if someone asks for a fourth, neutral category, they would need to give a great example of a group of people who have come into another culture and not deeply influenced it in such a way as to make way for the worship of other gods. It is also prudent to keep in mind that there are nefarious workers out there seeking to undermine the kingdom of God. Solutions proposed are with the purpose of preserving and advancing a Christian culture in whatever country we might find ourselves in. Including the United States of America.

How do the world and the bible define immigration? Both have people immigrating that want to be a part of the culture (American, Israelite). Both have refugees (such as those scoundrel moabites!<sup>20</sup>). But the secular world sees their coming and hopes for their influence to shift and change the landscape. Again, whether for nefarious or incidental purposes. The admonitions to care for the stranger in the bible are toward caring for them because they would not be able to take care of themselves. The difference is that Christians ought to care for those who are in need, but not necessarily invite people to come in and lead us away to other gods.

Therefore we ought to consider mass immigration from non Christian cultures as reason to reject their arrival. It ought to be looked at as a sort of invasion. Doug Wilson called it a judgement from the Lord, and it's hard to argue when you see how Babylon, upon taking out the northern kingdom into captivity, brought in the people known at the time of Jesus the Samaritans!<sup>21</sup> The solution would be first, to repent as a nation, but then also to act decisively to

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<sup>20</sup> Joshua 9:3-27

<sup>21</sup> 2 Kings 17:24-41

immediately stop immigration from non Christian countries. This was first proposed by the 1911 commission in regards to Hindus - not only because of their darker skin, but their religion! How much more should we filter out those who would readily destroy “the great satan”?

Basically, if you’re not Christian, if you’re not open to becoming a Christian, there would be limits on how many in that mindset would be allowed in. Would we get liars? Yes, but if caught deportation is definitely on the table. When a nation worships other gods, they deteriorate and fall apart. The warnings to the Israelites are still potent warnings for us.

As for refugees, I would argue that there is even more reason for them to come in - but always with the understanding that there could be no capitulation to the worship of other gods. Deportation here would also be on the table.

## **Conclusion**

Immigration is defined very well in the bible - they are going there to live there. The sojourner is a person who is in transit, on his way somewhere else. The alien is someone who might live there, but they are not from there, and likely are hoping to move on. Those who fight for unfettered immigration understand that they are transforming culture rather than preserving it. Preserving Christian culture ought to be championed in the U.S. We saw that God used the Israelites as immigrants in order to kick out the previous nation.

Taking all of this into consideration, immigration should be heavily regulated and lean heavily toward keeping a nation Christian. The telos of our immigration policy ought to be evangelistic in its purpose - that is it should make disciples of the nations. Are their strangers in the land? Treat them as the widows, orphans, and poor - Feed them, clothe them, shelter them. “Is this not the fast that I have chosen? - break the chains of wickedness, untie the ropes of the burdened, set the oppressed free!” (Isaiah 58:6)

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