

Migration and Mission: Biblical Foundations for a Divine Perspective on New Global Realities

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1. Introduction

The Challenge: *To Think Self-Consciously as Christians*

Importance: *Centrality of the Immigration Metaphor for Faith (1 Peter 2:11; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 13:14; cf. Eph. 2:11-22)*

Reading the Bible: *A Majority Culture View & An Immigrant Appreciation*

Relating the Immigration Discussion to Diaspora Missiology

2. The Old Testament: An Orientation for the Discussion

2.1. The Place to Begin the Conversation on Immigration: The Image of God—Connecting with the Immigrant's Humanity

2.1.1. The importance of a *constructive* starting point: the immigrants' *humanity* vs. their legal status

2.1.2. The meaning and significance of the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28)

2.2. The Mission to Be a Blessing and the Diaspora Experience

2.2.1. The Mission Defined (Gen. 12:1-3)

2.2.2. The Blessing Explained

2.3. Experiences of God' People—Connecting with Immigrants' Lives and Witness

- Abram/Abraham (Gen. 12:10-20; cf. Deut. 26:5-8): the pressures at the border
- Joseph (Gen. 37, 39-50): assimilated yet maintained cultural identity
- Egypt (Exod. 1-5): the fear of the numbers → draconian laws
- Naomi and Ruth: the complex process of assimilation
- Jeremiah's letter to the Babylonian exiles (Jer. 29)
- Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther: different levels of assimilation

2.4. Old Testament Legislation—Connecting with the Challenges of Legislation

2.4.1. The nature of law and the values that shape *law* and *identity* – in particular in regards to outsiders

2.4.2. Laws pertaining to the foreigner and their enduring value (**Deut. 4: 5-8**)

- **The *vulnerability* of the outsider**

➤ The lack of extended family

➤ The problem of land ownership in a peasant economy

- **The provisions of the Law to meet that vulnerability** (and lessons for the thrust of legislation today: compassion or punishment)
 - Labor: rest and wages (Exod. 20:10; 23:12; Deut. 5:14; 24:14-15)
 - Justice (Deut. 1:16-17; 24:17-18; 27:19)
 - Food (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 14:28-29; 24:19-22 → Ruth)
 - Inclusion in worship (e.g., Exod. 12:45-49; Lev. 16:29)
 - “Love your neighbor...” → “Love the foreigner...” (Lev. 19:18 → 33-34)
 - Expectations for the outsider: knowledge of the language and law (Deut. 31:8-13)
- **The motivations to obey the laws**
 - Historical memory (Exod. 22:21; 23:9; Lv. 19:18, 34; Deut. 24:17-18)
 - The person and commitment of God (Deut. 10:17-19; 24:14-15)

2.4.3. Immigration Law and Diaspora Mission

3. The New Testament: Connecting with Christian Mission

3.1. Learning from Jesus: His Life and His Teaching about ‘Outsiders’

- 3.1.1. The life of Jesus: a refugee in Egypt (Matt. 2:13-23)
- 3.1.2. The ministry and teaching of Jesus to the outsiders
 - (a) the general thrust of his work (**Matt. 25:31-46**; Lk. 4:16-30; 14:15-24)
 - (b) the gentiles (Matt. 8:5-14 // Lk. 7:1-10; Mk. 7:24-30)
 - (c) the Samaritans (**Lk. 10:25-37**; 17:11-19; Jn. 4)

3.2. Migration, Mission, and the Plan of God

God has brought a new mission field to the U.S. We can reach out to these people, and they also can be partners in mission here and elsewhere.

Diaspora and the early church (which were *diaspora churches*):

- 3.2.1. Acts 8:1-8; 11:19-30 – Christians scattered through persecution
- 3.2.2. Acts 13:1-3 – multiethnic church and outreach
- 3.2.3. Acts 15 and epistles (Gal. 1-3; Eph. 2-5) – ethnic tensions in congregations
- 3.2.4. Diaspora Christians and Outreach of Gospel
 - (a) Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:1-3, 18-23; Rom. 16:3-5; 1 Cor. 16:19): Italy, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome
 - (b) Apollos (Acts 18:24-28; cf. 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4-6, 22; 4:6; 16:12; Titus 3:13): Alexandria, Ephesus, Achaia/Corinth
 - (c) Paul in Acts (cf. Rom. 1:16-17):
 - identity: a diaspora Jew from Tarsus (Acts 9:11; 21:29; 22:3), who also was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37-38; 22:25-29)
 - strategy: began work in cities by first contacting diaspora Jews in their synagogues (*Pisidian Antioch*, Acts 13:14-52; *Iconium*, Acts 14:1-5; *Thessalonica*, Acts 17:1-4; *Berea*, Acts 17:10-12; *Athens*, Acts 17:16-17; *Corinth*, Acts 18:4-7; *Ephesus*, Acts 18:19-22, 19:8-10)

3.3. The Call to Charitable Hospitality (Lk. 14:12-14; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:9; Gal. 6:10; Heb. 13:2) → **the Body of Christ and the perspective of the Lord’s**

Supper (1 Cor. 11-12; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 2:11-22). Hospitality and the Lord's Supper as mission.

4. Romans 12-13

- 4.1. How do we approach Romans 13? A broader frame of reference and a new set of questions and perspectives**
- 4.2. The importance of Romans 12 → Romans 13: Prioritize perspectives and commitments**
- 4.3. Romans 12-13, Immigration, and Diaspora Mission**