

Immigration and the Spirituality of Justice

Leviticus 19:33–34

“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

God’s Heart for the Vulnerable

Throughout Scripture, God repeatedly commands care for **three especially vulnerable groups:**

- **Widows** – without economic protection
- **Orphans** – without family protection
- **Strangers (Aliens)** – without land, citizenship, or legal power

“*The LORD loves the stranger.*” (Deuteronomy 10:18)

How God’s people treat these groups is a **measure of faithfulness and justice.**

God’s command is not just tolerance, but **love.**

Who Is the “Stranger” in the Bible?

Different Bible translations use different words for the same idea: **Stranger , Sojourner, Alien, Immigrant**

Ancient Immigration: Cultural Background

In the ancient world: There were **no passports or legal systems** like today

People migrated because of: famine, war or violence, economic survival, forced displacement

Israel’s laws were **countercultural:**

- Immigrants rested on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10)
- Immigrants could gather food through gleaning (Leviticus 19:9–10)
- Immigrants were treated equally under the law (Numbers 15:15–16)

God repeatedly reminded Israel:

“You were aliens in the land of Egypt.” Memory shaped justice.

Immigrants in the Bible

God works powerfully through immigrants:

- **Abraham** – left his homeland to follow God
- **Joseph** – an immigrant who saved many lives
- **Israel** – a nation shaped by immigrant experience
- **Ruth** – a foreigner welcomed into God’s covenant
- **Jesus and His Parents** – refugees fleeing violence (Matthew 2)

Migration is not incidental—it is woven into God’s story.

The New Testament: Christians as Sojourners

The New Testament teaches that Christians are:

- **Aliens and exiles** (1 Peter 2:11)
- **Strangers on the earth** (Hebrews 11:13)
- Citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20)

Spiritual Truth:

All Christians are, in a sense, **immigrants**—living temporarily in a world that is not our final home.

Key Takeaways

- God loves and defends the vulnerable
- Israel was commanded to love the stranger
- Jesus experienced life as a refugee
- Christians are sojourners with heavenly citizenship

Reflection Question:

How might God be calling us to practice justice, compassion, or hospitality this week?