

**“Immigration, Refugees, Etc.”**

**The Bible and Culture - NLPC Summer 2018 - Week 5**

- Misapplication of Old Testament (OT) passages on the stranger and alien...

*Leviticus 19:33–34 - <sup>33</sup> “When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. <sup>34</sup> You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.*

- Some believers read that verse and make the following conclusions...
  - ▶ God says all refugees and immigrants should be welcome in the U.S. indiscriminately...
  - ▶ And when they do come, they should be treated just like American citizens, with all protections and benefits.
- Yet we have to remember that OT Israel was primarily a spiritual *preview* of the New Testament (NT) church:
  - ▶ Thus, it’s not a 1-1 blueprint for modern nation states.
  - ▶ Obviously the church fulfills Israel’s religious life in offering spiritual sacrifices of praise, being a priesthood, a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9).
  - ▶ Yet notice how the NT applies OT Israel’s civil laws to the *church*:

*1 Corinthians 9:7–11 - <sup>7</sup> Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Or who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? <sup>8</sup> Do I say these things on human authority? Does not the Law say the same? <sup>9</sup> For it is written in the Law of Moses, “You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.” Is it for oxen that God is concerned? <sup>10</sup> Does he not certainly speak for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of sharing in the crop. <sup>11</sup> If we have sown spiritual things among you, is it too much if we reap material things from you?*

- ❖ Paul is talking about a minister’s Biblical right to be paid by those to whom he preaches.
- ❖ And he applies an OT law about oxen to make the point, claiming it was really about an issue in the church.

❖ Or consider the passage below:

*1 Corinthians 5:11–13* - <sup>11</sup> But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? <sup>13</sup> God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

❖ Paul is dealing with the need to put an unrepentant sinner out of the church.

❖ The quote at the end however is from Deuteronomy...

- It’s a phrase that routinely comes up when a person is to be executed (for adultery, idolatry, etc.)
- Yet Paul uses that phrase as instruction for excommunication.

• With that in mind, the many OT passages supporting the welcoming of strangers and aliens need to be applied first to the *church*.

▶ IOW, how should *we* treat those who are new to our fellowship?

▶ We should welcome them with the love of the Lord...

❖ For unbelievers this would, of course, include the gospel...

❖ Letting them know how they can become an official citizen of the Kingdom of God...

❖ With no requirements put on them except repentant faith in Christ.

• **Note:** None of this is to say that there aren’t political principles that can wisely be carried over from OT laws...

▶ But we need to be very careful in doing so...

▶ The Westminster Confession provides a helpful guide:

*19:4* - To them [OT Israel] also, as a body politic, he gave sundry [various] judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging any other now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

- All of this to say that there's nothing in the "strangers and aliens" laws of OT Israel that *demand*s the U.S. incorporate every aspect in U. S. immigration policy.
  - ▶ Let's not forget how they would've been applied in Israel:
    - ❖ No foreign sojourner would have been allowed freedom of religious expression - not in the least!
    - ❖ All moral laws would've have to have been followed (death penalty for adultery, idolatry, forms of sabbath breaking).
    - ❖ There was no social safety net that would've provided publicly funded benefits or welfare.
    - ❖ There were no public schools.
    - ❖ They wouldn't have been allowed to marry an Israelite (unless they'd been converted).
    - ❖ Land ownership would've been really difficult without connection to an Israelite family.

- Let's look at the Biblical idea of borders and the magistrate.

- First, national leaders are installed by the Lord and given a specific role:

***Romans 13:3–4*** - <sup>3</sup> *For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, <sup>4</sup> for he is God's servant (deacon) for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.*

***1 Peter 2:13–14*** - <sup>13</sup> *Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.*

- ▶ Leaders, no matter how they come to power, are given authority by God.
  - ▶ They have authority to punish those who do harm to their citizens and to praise those who do good.
- Second, God ordains the borders of their nations:

***Acts 17:26*** - <sup>26</sup> *And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place...*

- ▶ The nations that exist in a given time period exist according to their divinely allotted time periods.
- ▶ Their boundaries (borders) are just as divinely determined.
- ▶ How else would a ruler/government know where their authority was and where it wasn't?
- Putting these two ideas together:
  - ▶ If a divinely appointed ruler ruling over divinely appointed borders has the responsibility to stop evil deeds and promote the benefit of his citizens...
  - ▶ It's not a leap to assume that a ruler or government has a right to limit the access to those seeking to enter the nation's realm (i.e. cross the border).
    - ❖ Whether it being mandating a legal process to enter...
    - ❖ Whether it be only allowing access at certain places and times...
    - ❖ Whether it be preemptively keeping known evil doers out...
  - ▶ Obviously the details will vary; but the principles appear obvious.
- God gives the same control of access to cities and homeowners...
  - ▶ God blessed and provided cities in the OT with walls that had gates, gates that were often closed.
  - ▶ God allowed homeowners to control access to their homes:
 

*Exodus 22:2 - If a thief is found breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there shall be no bloodguilt for him,*
  - ▶ Jesus implied that access to private property should be limited and controlled:
 

*John 10:1-2 - <sup>1</sup> "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. <sup>2</sup> But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*
  - ▶ Given the above, why would a ruler/nation not be allowed to control and restrict access to their regions?
    - ❖ Particularly when they are to protect their citizenry's lives and property?

- An additional related principle: Forced Charity is not Biblical:
  - Almost everyone who supports full and free immigration supports the access of immigrants/refugees to all public services.
    - ▶ None of those are free!
    - ▶ All require the tax dollars of U.S. Citizens to fund such services.
  - Where in the Bible is the principle of forced charity ever found?
    - ▶ It never, ever is.