



THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

TO: **LEGISLATORS**FROM: **PASTOR RALPH DROLLINGER 661-803-7970 24/7/365**DATE: **APRIL 2 2012**

An insider tip when feeling the heat of the November elections: Seek first the Kingdom of God (Matthew 6:33).

Whatever the career, it is quite easy to fall into the tyranny of the urgent when the pressures of life seek to surmount us. It is incumbent of our fallen nature to become anxious and place our aim and energies on whatever the heated subject of the moment—be it another candidate entering the race, raising money, or placating the resulting lack of attention to some other detail (Philippians 4:6). But being a Fireman tends to crowd out God.

Reject that lifestyle in your heart! Start your day with devotion to our Savior and watch with anticipation for what He will do in honor of your correct disciplines and priorities—things you couldn't do on your own.

Let those results inform and train you into a prioritized man or woman of God. Distill Zechariah 4:6 in your heart (which was written to a civil leader): “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord of Hosts.” Remember, who you are on the inside will determine what you accomplish on the outside.

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THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing problem of over 13 million illegal immigrants in the United States, and given the seeming lack of governmental resolve for a solution, it seems timely and proper to engage God's Word on this subject.

Exegetical discipline, when it comes to my **Bible and Policy Series** is to discover the analogous voice of God's Word on a policy matter—not to offer sometimes detailed and complex policy positions. That's your job, and I might add a much more difficult one. In this ongoing series I provide you with the non-negotiable bedrock for framing God-honoring policy based upon the inviolate absolutes of the recurring teaching of God's Word. But at best I can only herald principles whereby the governing authority best reasons political remedies that in the end will be solutions that inculcate God's related attributes and principles that come to bear on the subject.

To say it metaphorically I can at best only set the train in a proper direction—but then at a certain point I have to get off—leaving a related list of Godly precepts on the seat for the boarding lawmaker. My prayer is that he or she might consider them in formulating laws that deliver a nation to a God-honoring destination, in this case, a God-honoring immigration policy.

II. THE TOWER OF BABEL

Immigration theology need begin in the Book of Genesis (like most all of theology I might add). In Genesis 9:1 and 9:7 after the flood, God repeats His command to mankind (first given in Genesis 1:28) to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Given the fallen nature of man (Gen. 3) mankind had and has a proclivity toward disobeying God. Such overt and continual rebellion necessitated the flood, and soon thereafter, herein, such rebellion was once again evident. Rather than scatter from the region of Ararat (per God's command in 11:4) the descendants of Noah willed to do the opposite: To stay-put and build a monument—not to God's

greatness—but to theirs! Note God's response in Genesis 11:6-8:

The LORD said, "Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them. "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech." So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city.

Here is the reason why God's design is for many individual nations and why it is His standard operating procedure. Sin necessitates a separation of power (akin to the genius of America's form of Government). Man's pride always manifests into a hunger for power, here, a one-nation-in-the-world form of existence and governance; wherein man worships his own greatness rather than His Creators'. Babel is illustrative of man's open rebellion to God (such is evident in its modern-day equivalent: The philosophy of Humanism).

Further evidence of God's opposition to a one-nation-world is the establishment of such by the coming Antichrist. Notice Revelation 13:7:

It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them, and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him.

In our recent study of the doctrine of sin, specifically Corporate Sin, we noted that Satan is *not* presently in control of Civil Government (a theological gaffe shared by many Evangelicals who thereby reason that “All governments are evil” and logically justify their separation from any involvement in it thenceforth) even though he acts like when he tempts Christ in Luke 4 (wherein he is lying). Notice specifically however at this future point in time, God *does* temporarily grant him that, and Satan does gain control of Civil Government in his rule over a one-nation-world. Accordingly in



THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

different ways both Genesis 11 and Revelation 13 serve to underscore this biblical truth:

PRESENTLY GOD DESIRES THE WORLD TO BE COHABITATED BY NUMEROUS INDEPENDENT NATIONS

This foundational theological truth is where a study of immigration need begin. Nations, by God's design are to have autonomous cultures and languages. Out of necessity and remedy for the fall and the power-hungry presence of sin, such is God's blueprint for today! In this way God is more apt to receive glory from His creation than if, likened to the prideful world-conquering empires of history, Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome, the dream of Hitler, or the accomplishment of the coming Antichrist, mankind repeatedly becomes caught-up in self-greatness and uses his unchecked assimilation of power to abuse others whom God has created in His image and likeness. Accordingly **so the Lord scattered**. Here then are several of the exegetical bases for this important, fundamental aspect of the Christian world view.

III. BORDERS AND BOUNDARIES

If sin necessitates God's standard and design for the world to be composed of independent nations, then sin in essence is the base reason why there needs to be a firm existence of national borders and boundaries. It follows that such are sanctioned by and stem from the mind and will of God.

Add to the discussion Romans 13:1 in the NT. This passage expressly states that God is the author of each nation:

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

That the will of God is independent nations with borders and boundaries is further evidenced by God's descriptive words of classification of people as seen in the OT nation of Israel.

IV. COUNTRYMAN AND SOJOURNERS

In numerous OT passages one learns that the God of Israel distinguished between three types of people in the land. An Israelite citizen is often referred to as a **countryman** *ach*, whereas a legal immigrant is referred to as a **sojourner** *ger* or *toshab*, and an illegal immigrant is called a **foreigner** *nokeri* or *zar*. Important to this study, evident from the OT, is that the **foreigner** did not possess the same benefits or privileges as a **sojourner**. Such can be illustrated from many passages. Notice for instance the words of Ruth the Moabite, and her response to Boaz the Israelite in Ruth 2:10:

Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

Not only was Ruth a **foreigner** *nokeri*, an illegal immigrant, she was a Moabite illegal, whom according to Deuteronomy 23:3 was forbidden to migrate into Israel altogether! In relation to the immigration laws of the land, to entertain Ruth whatsoever was a remarkably generous and gracious offer on behalf of Boaz (if not illegal). (Perhaps Boaz already had marriage on his mind which tends to bypass the paperwork of any country's "Ellis Island" so to speak). The point is that Ruth's self-declaration serves to underscore the classification of people in and by Ancient Israel.

Conversely, a **countryman** was expressly forbidden to mistreat a **sojourner**, or legal immigrant per Exodus 22:21 and Deuteronomy 10:19 respectively:

You shall not wrong a sojourner or oppress him, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

Again, a **sojourner** could be likened to a legal immigrant and a foreigner could be likened to an illegal immigrant today. Note Hoffmeier who is a



THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

noted OT scholar in this regard (page 52, *The Immigration Crisis*):

A sojourner (sometimes translated as stranger) was a person who entered Israel and followed legal procedures to obtain recognized standing as a resident alien.

Hoffmeier goes on to say, that on the other hand, Israel treated illegal immigrants differently:

Illegal immigrants should not expect these same privileges from the state whose laws they disregard by virtue of their undocumented status.

In an expansion of this concept, the immigration laws of every nation are not only biblically-based in Israel, but established by and representational of the will of God elsewhere. In other words, God distinguishes in His mind and will the differentiation between citizens, immigrants and foreigners in every nation He (in light of Genesis 11) forced into existence.

THE GOD OF INDEPENDENT NATIONS DISTINGUISHES THE PEOPLES OF A NATION

It therefore follows that governmental leaders today in every nation—to be biblically representational—should invoke and staunchly maintain legal distinctions between citizens, immigrants and foreigners. As obvious as this conclusion may seem, there are those who believe that because God is impartial, and created all mankind in His image, that believers should be the leading proponents of a borderless world. Impartiality and *Imago Dei* however can be easily inculcated into the above nationalistic distinctions also taught in Scripture; the former does not negate the later, all being important truths of God (cf. Acts 20:27).

V. OBEYING CIVIL AUTHORITY

Romans 13:1-7 and 1Peter 2:13-14 infer that all people should respect the immigration laws

established by the leadership of a given country. Note in this regard Romans 13:4:

For [Government] is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.

In this passage, Paul is addressing believers who are citizens of the Roman Empire. Not only does he state the need for them to abide by the rule of law, which immigration is certainly a part of (contr. Acts 22:25-29), but carefully notice also from this passage that he implies what should be the motive behind the lawmaker's laws: To look out for the welfare of the people. Such laws he says are intended **for your good** (NAB).

God desires that immigration laws be motivated out of protection of a culture and its citizenry—not from any other motive, specifically racism.

Such proper attitudes are reflected by the lawmakers who wrote the US Constitution. It states that the laws of America are motivated by and meant to “ensure domestic tranquility” and to “provide for the common defense.” Such are noble, biblical desires that need continue to be incorporated in the attitude and spirit of necessary immigration reform policies.

In that God intends for citizens to obey their governing authorities, and in that those authorities have deemed positive and negative migratory definitions, it follows that the immigration laws of every nation need be biblically based and strictly enforced—with utmost confidence in God's approval!

VI. RESTRICTIONIST NOT RACIST

It need be especially underscored from the above that to be an immigration restrictionist does not necessarily equate to being a racist. Imposing strict restrictions on immigration should be from motives of ensuring the general welfare of the nation. To



THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

exclude foreign individuals from citizenship who have criminal records, are traitors, or possess communicable diseases is not racist in the least; it is to protect the citizens of the nation.

VII. NO BOUNDARIES, NO COMPASSION

One last argument is worth noting. In a world of limited resources and GDP, for a nation to possess no boundaries or deference relative to aliens is to in the end be compassionless. Such leniency, as evidenced by current American immigration policies eventually bankrupts the treasury rendering appropriate gestures of compassion impossible.

VIII. APPLICATION

The standard of Scripture on immigration is obvious, consistent and not difficult to understand. But the question as to how a nation that has strayed from God's standard gets back to God's expectations is a complex one.

This is where I start to get off the train as an expositor, and defer to the wisdom of boarding policymakers, having exegeted for you the bedrock, inviolate biblical position on immigration. But not so fast! The services of exposition need include illuminating other inviolate principles of Scripture and attributes of God that need be incorporated—all of them, not just some—in manifesting comprehensive sound policy. There are at least six biblical principles that come to bear:

A. GOVERNMENTS MUST PROTECT THEIR PEOPLE

In Romans 13:3 Paul states under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, “do what is good and you will have praise from [governing authorities].” Most governments seek the welfare of their people; that is how God designed them to be. It is out of this inherent desire imbued by their Designer, that governmental bodies want to protect their citizens—and if they don't they should. In terms of immigration, for a government to be pleasing to

God and receive His blessing, it must protect its people from illegal immigration per Romans 13:3. Anything less than laws that serve to protect violates God's intention for governments.

B. PERSONAL INDUSTRIOUSNESS, NOT GOVERNMENT, IS GOD'S MEANS OF PROVISION FOR INDIVIDUALS

Part of the curse of The Fall of Man in Genesis 3:17-19 was the economic necessity that he now would have to work in order to obtain necessary provisions. Paul stated this same idea in 2Thessalonians 3:10:

For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

The Institution of Government is not God's intended means for providing for people, rather Government's role is limited to “rewarding those who do good and punishing those who do evil” (1Peter 2:13-14). Fundamental to immigration reform is to remove the governmental magnet of alluring entitlements that entice illegal entry into the country. Such forms of provision are not pleasing to God and only work to destroy personal honor and character in the recipient.

C. GOVERNMENTS MUST FURTHER THEIR COUNTRY

Akin to the above, also based upon Romans 13:3, is the inherent responsibility of a government to advance the country, meaning they will want to enact immigration policies that only allow people into the country who can advance it, not detract.

D. GOVERNMENTS ARE ENTITLED TO COLLECT TAXES

In that every country is competing with others in the world market, the lesser the tax the more competitive the nation. Having stated that, God grants every government the right to collect all forms of tax from every citizen. Note Romans 13:6



THE BIBLE AND POLICY: IMMIGRATION

For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them; tax to whom tax is due...

Especially interesting to this topic, the Greek word for **taxes** *phoros* specifically relates to the taxes a person would need to pay to those who conquered their nation. The double emphasis being this: Even if one is in subjugation to a foreign leader (which is the case with an Illegal), they are nevertheless obligated to pay taxes. Further, the word for **Render** *apodidomi* has the connotation of “paying something that is owed.” Comprehensive immigration reform need take this biblical principle into consideration in the formation of God-glorifying policy.

E. GOVERNMENTS MUST PUNISH EVILDOERS

As previously seen in Romans 13:4, God intends for Governments to bear the sword. They are to be “an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil.” This means Government is sanctioned and responsible to punish those who break the law. There must be an extraction of due recompense for crimes committed, including illegal immigration. God’s attribute of righteousness and justice means there is always to be a payment to balance an offense (versus simply letting an illegal go back to his or her country with no fines). This principle suggests that immigration reform must demand a cost for those who have entered America illegally. Conversely, immigration amnesty does not mete out the justice of God to those who have worked through the legal process to become a citizen of the United States.

F. GOVERNMENTS MUST DISPLAY LOVE AND COMPASSION

God is a God of grace and mercy, long suffering and forgiving. How these attributes play into the formation of immigration reform must not be left on the side table of the House or Senate subcommittee room.

**IT IS EASY TO BE A “NOISY GONG” OR
A “CLANGING CYMBAL”
ALWAYS STANDING UP RIGIDLY
FOR THE TRUTH, BUT
“WITHOUT LOVE I AM NOTHING”**

Thus states Paul in 1Cor. 13:1. “Love is patient, love is kind” to people! These aspects of our loving Father cannot be ignored in the formation of immigration reform. We have all broken man’s law and God’s law at one time or another—and yet God is willing to forgive us! Without violating or omitting any of the aforementioned biblical principles, the lawmaker must think through and pass reforms that incorporate the whole counsel of God—not just a part of it in isoetic selfishness.

IX. CONCLUSION

Here are those six principles manifest respectively:

A: Foreigners should not be allowed in a country. Borders and Oceans should be impenetrable.

B: Foreigners should not be able to partake of governmental entitlements (Governments should not be in that business to begin with).

C: Foreigners who can help advance (not detract) should be allowed to immigrate. Foreigners seeking citizenship (F) should have citizen-sponsors who can testify to past productivity.

D: Foreigners should be required pay *all* taxes, both present and past due.

E: Foreigners, both those headed toward citizenship or extradition should be punished.

F: Governments and citizens should display love and compassion (perhaps in the form of an opportunity for Foreigners to begin a similar to other legal immigrants rigorous course of study) in order to attain citizenship within a specified period of time, perhaps, graciously while remaining here.

These ideas all flow from the biblical principles.