

Biblical References to Immigrants and Refugees

*The following passages from the Bible refer to immigrants and refugees.
All quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.*

Genesis 3:22-24 – Adam and Eve are forced out of the Garden.

Genesis 7 and 8 – Noah builds an ark and takes refuge from the flood.

Genesis 12:1 – The call of Abram: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

Genesis 12:10 – “Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land.”

Genesis 19 – Lot takes his family and flees Sodom.

Genesis 23 – Abraham is a stranger and an alien in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 46:1-7 – Jacob moves his family to Egypt to escape the famine and reunite with Joseph.

Genesis 47: 1-6 – Joseph brings his brothers to Pharaoh and they are welcomed and given jobs.

Exodus 1:8-14 – Joseph’s generation is gone, and the Egyptians oppress the Israelites. “Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor.”

Exodus 1:15-2:10 – Pharaoh orders all the Hebrew boy babies to be killed, but Moses is hidden and is saved by Pharaoh’s daughter.

Exodus 12:37-39 – The Israelites were driven out of Egypt so fast they had no time to make provisions and had to bake unleavened cakes of bread.

Exodus 12:49 and Leviticus 24:22 – “There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.”

Exodus 22:21 – Moses gives God’s law: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19:9-10 and 23:22 – Moses gives God’s law: “You shall not strip your vineyards bare...leave them for the poor and the alien.”

Leviticus 19:33-34 and 24:22 – When the 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.”

Leviticus 24:23 – Moses receives God’s law: “With me you are but aliens and tenants.”

Numbers 9:14 and 15:15-16 – “...you shall have one statute for both the resident alien and the native.”

Numbers 35 and Joshua 20 – The Lord instructs Moses to give cities of refuge to the Levites so that when the Israelites must flee into Canaan they may have cities of refuge given to them.

Deuteronomy 1:16 – “Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien.”

Deuteronomy 6:10-13 – The people of Israel are made aware that the land had come to them as a gift from God and they were to remember that they were once aliens.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 – “For the Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12-13 – Tithing was begun, in part, for resident aliens.

Deuteronomy 24:14 – “You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land...”

Deuteronomy 24:17-18 – “You shall not deprive a resident alien...of justice.”

Deuteronomy 24:19-22 – Leave sheaf, olives, grapes for the alien.

Deuteronomy 26:5 – A wandering Aramean was my ancestor...

Deuteronomy 27:19 – “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien...of justice.”

I Chronicles 22:1-2 – Aliens were important in building the temple.

I Chronicles 29:14-15 – David praises God: “We are aliens and transients before you...”

II Chronicles 2:17-18 – Solomon took a census of all the aliens and assigned them work.

Psalms 105 – Remembering their sojourn: “When they were few in number, of little account, and strangers in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people,...”

Psalms 137:1-6 – “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept...How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?”

Psalms 146:9 – “The Lord watches over the strangers...”

Ecclesiastes 4:1 – “Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them.”

Isaiah 16:4 – Be a refuge to the outcasts of Moab.

Jeremiah 7:5-7 – “If you do not oppress the alien...then I will dwell with you in this place...”

Jeremiah 22:3-5 – Do no wrong or violence to the alien.

Ezekiel 47:21-22 – The aliens shall be to you as citizens, and shall also be allotted an inheritance.

Zechariah 7:8-10 – Do no oppress the alien.

Malachi 3:5 – The messenger will bear witness against those who thrust aside the alien.

Matthew 2:13-15 – Jesus and parents flee Herod’s search for the child.

Matthew 5:10-11 – “Blessed are those who are persecuted.”

Matthew 25:31-46 – “...I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Luke 3:11 – “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none...”

Luke 4:16-21 – “...Bring good news to the poor...release to the captives...sight to the blind...let the oppressed go free.”

Romans 12:13 – “Mark of the true Christian: “...Extend hospitality to strangers...”

II Corinthians 8:13-15 – “It is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need...”

Ephesians 2:11-22 – “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”

Hebrews 11 – “By faith Abraham...set out for a place...not knowing where he was going.”

Hebrews 13:1-2 – “...show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels...”

James 2:5 – “Has not God chosen the poor in the world...”

James 2:14-17 – “What good is it...if you say you have faith but do not have works?”

I John 3:18 – “...Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”

I John 4:7-21 – “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God...” We love because God first loved us.”