

What Ever Happened to the Golden Rule?

Part 2 — Immigration

Steve Berger February 11, 2018

Review — Kingdom Ethics or Cultural Evils?

- Golden Rule is summary of entire Sermon on the Mount
- Golden Rule is summary of law and prophets — bespeaks its importance
- Golden Rule isn't unique to Jesus — it was historically *defensive* — He made it *offensive*!

Today — *investigate a hot button, controversial issue that is at the forefront of American politics — and its surprising connection to the Golden Rule — Immigration — I know and believe Kingdom Ethics should shape national policy as much as possible. These points have been enthusiastically received by Christian leaders.*

Disclaimer

- studying and meditating on biblical immigration for months, although these principles don't map over perfectly for our day — there are many issues we could benefit from in developing our own opinions as well as crafting immigration reform.
- **DO NOT HEAR ME SAY THIS IS THE END-ALL TO IMMIGRATION ISSUES!**
- **DO HEAR ME SAY THAT IF THE SPIRIT OF THESE PRINCIPLES WERE APPLIED TO OUR IMMIGRATION PROBLEM, WE WOULD BE MUCH BETTER OFF!**

Questions Answered

- Does the scripture speak to the issue? It actually does.
- Should we discard the spirit of these biblical principles of immigration because we don't live in an ancient theocracy, or because there isn't a perfect crossover? No. Take spirit of principles.
- Should Kingdom Ethics or Cultural Evils shape our opinions and laws of immigration on a personal and national level? ... or "Doesn't matter, who cares."

My Study

- Studied every verse and its surrounding context of the words:
Strangers Foreigners Sojourners Aliens

Interesting

- ***all the verses seemed to fall under 7 categories***
1) Understanding 2) Conversion 3) Assimilation 4) Justice 5) Generosity 6) Love 7) Accountability

More Interesting

- 4 of the 7 would be embraced more favorably by both political parties
- seek a balance — a compromise of our favorites in order to achieve a balanced whole

GOALS

- 1) to unpack the biblical principles of immigration; 2) to know and understand Kingdom Ethics; 3) to apply them to our personal and national dialogue; 4) for the benefit of people and the glory of God...

Understanding — *remember what it was like when you were a stranger in Egypt*

- God ties their personal experience to how they should treat others — Golden Rule!
- **Exodus 23:9**
Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.
 - Don't treat others how you hated to be treated, put yourselves in others shoes, have some understanding!
- **Leviticus 19:33-34**
And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.
 - dwelling stranger isn't a traveler, immigrant, treat as one born among you, love him as yourself, 19:18, you were strangers, I am the LORD your God
- **Deuteronomy 24:17-18**
You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. But you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.
 - remember Egyptian slavery, God redeemed you, God commands reciprocal treatment of strangers, Golden Rule!

FACT — the spirit of the Golden Rule is tied to Israel's immigration policy, “understand who you were in Egypt, remember what I did for you, do that for others, UNDERSTANDING!”

Obviously — *Israel didn't tolerate those who meant them personal or national harm, we're not talking about allowing and affirming terrorists in our midst — don't go to extremes and penalize the innocent!*

YES — Kingdom Ethics of *Understanding, Love, Discernment*

NO — Cultural Evils of *fear, suspicion, paranoia, and discrimination*

Conversion

- if there was a desire to stay and be numbered among Israel, strangers and foreigners had to fully accept the values, laws and ways of Israel — CONVERSION!
- **Numbers 9:14**
And if a stranger dwells among you, and would keep the LORD's Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; you shall have one ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.
 - immigrant must obey ordinances and rites just like the national
- **Numbers 15:14-16**
And if a stranger dwells with you, or whoever is among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do. One ordinance shall be for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells with you, an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.

- 3 times, same laws apply to both, one ordinance for all, conversion if worshipping
- **Isaiah 56:6-7**
Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants, everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant, even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.
 - example of conversion and God’s acceptance of it

FACT — we need an immigration policy that demands a conversion to American values, laws and ways!

- **Declaration of Independence-** 3 unalienable rights- Life, Liberty, Pursuit of Happiness
 - **YES TO THOSE!**
- **Constitution** — We the People of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
 - **YES TO JUSTICE, TRANQUILITY, DEFENSE, WELL-BEING, LIBERTY!**
- **Bill of Rights** — freedoms of religion, speech, press, right to bear arms etc.
 - **YES!**

Sharia — *Muslim Sharia law is totally incompatible with the US Constitution.*

You want to *follow Sharia*, stay out — you want to *follow Sharia*, get out!

Conversion to our values, laws and ways is a must for every immigrant seeking citizenship!

Assimilation

- a conversion so genuine that you actually practice the values, laws and ways of the nation
- **Isaiah 56:6-7**
conversion — joined, serve, love;
assimilation — by not defiling Sabbaths, holding fast to the covenant, participating in burnt offerings and sacrifices... more...
- **Deuteronomy 31:12**
Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess.
 - stranger must hear, learn, carefully observe all the law, as long as you live in the land, ASSIMILATION!

Famous story of Conversion and Assimilation

- Ruth the widowed Moabites — stranger and foreigner to Israel, Jewish husband dies...
- **Ruth 1:15-17** — Naomi, mother-in-law, says to her...
“Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts

you and me.”

FACT — this is Ruth’s conversion and assimilation moment — you lodge, I lodge; your people, my people; your God, my God! They return to Israel...

- Meets Boaz, a Jewish man, who understands God’s ways, blesses her...
- **Ruth 2:10-12**
So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

Without question — Ruth was converted and assimilated into Israel, due to God’s laws of immigration. 100’s of years had passed since God first said, “remember and understand what its like to be a foreigner, treat them how you’d like to be treated.” Boaz knew it, and did it for Ruth!

Application — *we need immigration policies and opinions that are rooted in understanding, conversion and assimilation.*

Want citizenship?

- we understand, we’re a nation of immigrants seeking life, liberty, pursuit of happiness!
- convert to our values, laws and ways.
- assimilate into our culture — speak our language — metaphorically and literally.

FACT — **biblical principles of immigration benefit the immigrant and the native — just ask Ruth and Boaz!**

Next week — Justice, Generosity, Love, Accountability

Discussion Questions

1. What did you think when you heard Pastor Steve say that we should “run to controversy and speak to it” with biblical principles of Kingdom Ethics? Or would you rather just “let it be”?
2. Read Leviticus 19:33-34. When does a person stop being a “stranger” and become “as one born among you”? Who do you personally know who this can relate to? (*i.e. Fancy Nails Vietnamese*)
3. How do the scriptures demonstrate the need of the foreigner to obey ordinances and rites just like the national?
4. How is Sharia law incompatible with the US Constitution?
5. Define assimilation in terms of Deuteronomy 31:12. What command does it give for their children, and for the length of time the law has to be observed?
6. How can biblical principles of immigration benefit the immigrant *and* the native?